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A REFUTATION

OF

HEREDITARY TOTAL DEPRAVITY,

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OR,

THE CHIEF CORNER STONE OF CALVINISTIC
AND ARMINIAN SECTARIANISM REMOVED.

BY

ELDER AYLETT RAINES.

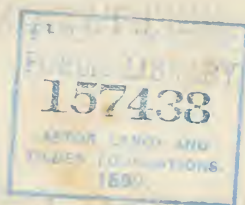
God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions.—PROVERBS.

PARIS, KY.

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1859.

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INTRODUCTION.

MORE than a quarter of a century ago I published the first edition of this work. It was a pretty large edition, but found so ready a sale that the whole of it was circulated in comparatively a short time. From that time to the present numerous orders have been sent me, many of them from distant States, which, of course, I have not been able to supply. Why I have not, ere this, published a second edition, may perhaps be attributed to my dilatoriness—perhaps to an overruling Providence, ever wise, ever gracious, who seeth not as man seeth! To his paternal care and blessing I commit this volume.

The impression on my mind has only deepened since the issue of the first edition, that the principles advocated in this work are correct and irrefragable. I have closely, and, I believe, candidly, read the several strictures and animadversions which have appeared against it from the sectarian press, and had the pleasure of hearing various attempts, by able men, at its refutation from the pulpit; but all these, together with my readings and reflections upon the subject of depravity for the last twenty-five years, have made, so far as my convictions are concerned, assurance doubly sure that hereditary total depravity is not only monstrously false, but that it is as pernicious as it is false—an enormous mischief, an incubus upon the great heart of society. I therefore feel that I am not

only doing God service, but contributing to the spiritual well-being of my fellow men by sending abroad the present edition.

When I wrote the first edition, I took it for granted that the leaders of the sects really believed the creed-doctrine of hereditary total depravity. This, I have been since convinced, is not generally the fact. They are now taking a world of pains to modify the doctrine, and to adapt it to the light and spirit of the present age. To do this requires, of course, all sorts of twisting and turning. Some of them endeavor to illustrate their ideas of depravity by a stove moderately warm, not red hot, but warm, or hot in all its parts, and therefore totally warm or hot. Others, by a glass of water, in which one single drop of blood has been dropped—not as polluted as it might be made by the putting in of more blood, but unclean, in a small degree, throughout, and therefore totally polluted. Or, by the process of coloring cloth, tinged throughout, and therefore totally dyed. Who does not see that these illustrations are clearly the giving up of the doctrine of the creeds? According to these, depravity is not a *tinge*, but perfect *blackness* “in every faculty of the soul and in every member of the body.” If the depravity indicated by the above illustrations be the whole for which the “evangelical sects” now contend, I have no very serious objections; for in this view of the subject the sinner is not by nature as *dead as a stone!*—the Word of God may, without any *abstract* or *extra* influences of the Spirit, excite faith in the minds of the unregenerate!—the unregenerate have, still unscathed by original sin, powers both intellectual and moral, by which, through the influences of the truth as it is in Jesus, they may obey the gospel and become Christians, and run so as to obtain the incorruptible crown.

Hereditary total depravity, by their own showing, is the foundation of the self-styled "evangelical sects." "The doctrine of total depravity," says Mr. Hendricks, in his letters to the 'self-styled Reformers,' "is emphatically fundamental." And he adds, "the whole plan of salvation is grafted in upon the stock of total depravity." The Rev. D. Holmes, A. M., says that "genuine Christianity stands or falls with it." And in the "Presbyterian Preacher," Vol. 4, No. 6, we have the following: "By nature all men are totally depraved." "Human depravity is at the *foundation* of the whole system of Christianity." These quotations may explain to the reader a part of my title page, "The chief corner stone of Calvinistic and Arminian sectarianism removed." The sects who suppose "the whole plan of salvation to be grafted in upon the stock of total depravity," suppose this to be also true, I presume, in regard to their "plans of salvation!" If I cut down this tree, or in any way eradicate it, its grafts, no matter how numerous, must fall with it; or if the temple of orthodoxy has for its foundation hereditary total depravity, and it shall be proved to be false, the temple sustained by it must necessarily fall; for says Mr. Holmes, "genuine Christianity stands or falls with it." Unless I am egregiously mistaken, I have felled this tree;—I have removed effectually and forever this ponderous corner stone!

I will conclude this introduction by giving Brother A. Campbell's notice of the first edition of this work. *Mill. Har.* vol. 4, p. 239.

"If any one desires to see an intelligible, scriptural, lucid and irrefragable refutation of hereditary total depravity, he will find it in a pamphlet recently published from Dayton, Ohio, and written by Aylett Raines, a brother of good degree (*verbum Dei magister*) and great boldness in

the faith. This faithful and laborious fellow-laborer in the kingdom of our common Lord and Savior, has found how much the notions and speculations, designated 'total depravity,' have operated against the reception of the gospel, and with great intellectual vigor has laid the mattock to the root of this tree. He has not merely cut it down, but eradicated its bitter roots from the soil; so that I think it will never germinate in the mind of any one who gives this volume a candid and faithful perusal."

AYLETT RAINES.

A REFUTATION OF HEREDITARY TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

THE CREEDS OF THE SELF-STYLED EVANGELICAL
SECTS TEACH THE DOCTRINE OF HEREDITARY
TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

WE shall begin with the Westminster, in other words, the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is *utterly* indisposed, disabled, and made *opposite* to *all* that is spiritually good, and *wholly* inclined to *all* evil, and that continually." Pa. 151.

SHORTER CATECHISM.—"Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell? *Ans.*—The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists of the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and *the corruption of his whole nature.*"

FISHER ON SHORTER CATECHISM.—"Doth original sin consist in a mere privation, or want of righteousness? *Ans.*—It consists also in the corruption of our whole nature. What is meant by the corruption of our whole nature? *Ans.*—The *universal depravation* both of *soul* and *body*, in *all* the *faculties* of the one, and *members* of the other. Is original sin of its own nature damning? *Ans.*—Beyond all doubt!"

BAPTIST PHILADELPHIA CONFESSION.—“Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them, whereby death came upon all, all becoming dead in sin, and *wholly* defiled in all the *faculties* and parts of soul and body. From this original corruption, whereby we are *utterly indisposed*, disabled, and made *opposite to all good*, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.” P. 24.

METHODIST DISCIPLINE, SEVENTH ARTICLE.—“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his *own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.*”

JOHN CALVIN'S EXPLANATION OF ORIGINAL SIN.—“Original sin seems to be the inheritable perverseness and corruption of our nature, poured abroad in *all parts of the soul*, which first maketh us deserving of God's wrath, and then also bringeth forth those works in us, called, in Scripture, the works of the flesh. These two things are distinctly to be noted, that is, that, being thus in *all parts of our nature perverted and corrupted*, we are now, even for such corruption, only holden worthy of damnation,” &c.

BUCK ON CALVINISM.—“They maintain that mankind are *totally depraved*, in consequence of the fall of the first man, who being their public head, his sin involved the corruption of all his posterity; and which corruption extends over the whole soul, and renders it unable to turn to God, or to do anything truly good, and exposes it to his righteous displeasure, both in this world and that which is to come.”

W. W. PERKINS.—“Reprobates are either infants or men of riper years. In reprobate in-

infants, the execution of God's decree is this; as soon as they are born, for the guilt of original and actual sin, being left in God's secret judgment unto themselves, they dying are rejected of God forever.—Vol. 1, p. 107, fol. 1603.

TWISS.—“Every man that is damned, is damned for original as well as actual sins, and many thousand infants only for original.”—*Riches of God's Love*, fol. 1653, pp. 149, 186.

ANTHONY BURGESS.—“Ah! how many little infants are and shall be in hell, who never had the knowledge of good and evil, and might not God have left thee in the same misery?”—*Burgess on Original Sin*, pp. 550, 551.

ARTHUR HILDERSHAM.—“There is in them (infants) a natural proneness, disposition and inclination to everything that is evil; as there is in the youngest lion, or of a bear, or of a wolf, unto cruelty, or in the egg of a cockatrice before it be hatched.” “You have heard it evidently proved, 1. That all infants are sinners, and deserve damnation. 2. That many infants have been vessels of wrath, and firebrands of hell!”—*Hildersham's Lectures on 51st Psalm*.

But why do I quote these authors, in connection with the creeds, in regard to original sin or hereditary total depravity? Because living far back in the dim light and predominating darkness in which the creeds were made, they are the best exponents of the creeds. They prove beyond successful contradiction, that the doctrine of the evangelical sects in those days, and, consequently, the doctrine of the Westminster Confession was, and is, hereditary total depravity in the very worst sense of the terms, involving even the horrible doctrine of infant damnation. Further references to the Confession, however, will put this question beyond rational dispute.

On page the 111, the Confession says that “the

visible Church consists of those who profess the true religion, together with their children, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." On page 277 we have the following: "The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are, his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual to *the elect* for salvation." "Infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in this respect within the covenant, and are to be baptized." P. 287. "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit." Page 52.

Now reader, scan critically these several extracts, and mark well the result. 1. Out of the visible Church there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. 2. The visible Church is composed of those who profess the true religion, together with their children. 3. Those who do not admit infant membership do not profess the true religion. 4. If these things be so, then none but the children of Pedobaptists are within the reach of any ordinary possibility of salvation. 5. If children whose parents do not bring them into the Church, are saved at all, it must be by an extraordinary possibility. 6. If but one of the parents professes faith and obedience, the children are within the covenant, and are to be baptized: the converse, of course, is true, and, consequently, unless one of the parents is a believer, the children are not to be baptized, and as "the outward and ordinary means" of salvation are "the Word, sacraments, and prayer," and as infants are incapable of prayer, and of being benefited by the hearing of the Word, the only remaining ordinary means of their salvation is *baptism*! An exceedingly slender means

most truly! But may there not still be hope? Yes: "*Elect* infants, dying in infancy, are saved!" But what becomes of the non-elect? According to this Confession all mankind are, at birth, nay, from before the foundation of the world, either elect or not elect — "the number of each being so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished." These things being admitted, the positive certainty is, that non-elect infants, dying in infancy, go to perdition!

But, farther: "The sinfulness of that estate whercinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin." The word man is generic, and stands for the whole race. On the thirty-first page the guilt of this first sin is said to "be imputed," and "the same death in sin, and corrupt nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation." Hence, it is said that "the fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse, so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come." Pa. 154. Mark it, reader, in this denunciation; *infants*, as well as adults, are involved! Well, what are the punishments of sin in the world to come? When we shall have ascertained this point, we shall have learned how much punishment infants, as well as men, deserve for having been born into the world with a sinful nature, or on account of original or birth-sin. "The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body in hellfire forever." Pa. 155. Has God furnished no remedy for these unfortunates, involved by their first father, without any act of their own, in this vortex of eternal ruin? Listen! "God doth

not leave *all* men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the covenant of works, but of his mere love and mercy delivereth the *elect* out of it," &c. Only the elect! Yes! for the confession says, that "by the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." Pa. 16 and 17. How much better is this than the doctrine of Hildersham, who says, that "all infants are sinners, and deserve damnation, and that many infants have been children of wrath, and fire-brands of hell!" The fact is, to any unprejudiced mind, the Confession teaches, but not in terms so offensive and glaring as are those used by Calvin and many others, the soul-sickening and God-dishonoring doctrine of infant damnation! Why not? The guilt of the sin of Adam is imputed to them, so that if *he* deserved eternal punishment, *they* likewise! They are said to be under the displeasure and wrath of God, and no provision is made, in the new covenant, for the salvation of any but the elect! If therefore, non-elect infants die in infancy, they, of course, according to the Confession, perish everlastingly; for God regenerates by his Spirit none that die in infancy, but such as the Confession-makers are pleased to style "elect infants."

A step farther. 1. If the race of man, without any act of their own, and by the act of another became guilty, in such a sense as to be justly liable to "all punishments," is it not a fact that a man may become infinitely guilty without the exercise of moral agency, though he may act from a resistless necessity?

2. If the race of Adam deserve "most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission,

in hell forever," at what time can any one of them be punished for his own sins? It will require an eternity of infinite, or "most grievous torments," to punish him adequately for the first sin of Adam! There will, consequently, be no period left in which to punish him for "the deeds done in the body." But as the Scriptures declare that we shall receive according to our works, and that the sins of the finally impenitent shall be punished with an everlasting punishment, I should like to know how much space will be left in which to punish any for the sin of Adam!

3. If by the organization of our moral nature we are the children of wrath and the bond-slaves of Satan, so as to be *wholly* inclined to *all sin*, and that *continually*, does it not follow that every unregenerate man is compelled by his own bad nature to commit all the sins which he does commit? Has a person, thus fettered and manacled, a free will?—and if not, does he deserve punishment for any outrage whatever which he may commit? We know that the advocates for the confession tell us that man has a free will. They proceed on the presumption that man has a free will and acts freely, because, although he can do nothing but sin, and can *will* to do nothing else, yet he is free to do as he *wills*! This is, to say the best of it, a strange freedom!—a freedom which might with great propriety be denominated necessity. It might be expressed thus: man is compelled, by a necessity of his own nature, to will as he does will, and to act as he wills; therefore, man is a free agent. In other words, man is free to act wickedly, because he is compelled by his own totally depraved nature to act wickedly!

4. When God asks the solemn question, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" they might respond, with awful emphasis,—and so may every

sinner on earth,—“Because we can not help it.” Our first father sinned and totally spoiled our moral nature—converted it into a torrent of original sinfulness, upon the bosom of which we are borne down, under the wrath and curse of God, to the bottomless abyss. Go to perdition we must, unless thou shalt give us “the effectual call.” We have no power to help ourselves, nor have we power to *will* to help ourselves. We are, in our inmost nature, by original sin, “utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil and that continually!”

It may, however, be said, that the devil is totally depraved, and can, therefore, do nothing but sin; and that if inability to abstain from sinning will clear man from guilt, who sins from the necessity of his moral nature, the same, or a similar inability will clear the devil from guilt! The cases are not analogous. If the devil is totally depraved—and I suppose he is—his depravity was a thing of his own making—he originated the whole of it by his own acts of rebellion against God; and is, consequently, as a moral agent, accountable for the whole of it, as well as for all the bitter fruits which it has produced or may produce hereafter. Not so, however, with man. His native total depravity—if, indeed, he is the subject of it—was *entailed* upon him. It was no more the result of his volitions than is the color of his hair or eyes. It was, then, his misfortune, not his fault. Why should the wrath of a merciful God burn with intense severity against a poor frail creature, for that which he could no more control than he could manage the machinery of the universe? Why should he let fall his red wrath and curse upon unconscious babes? Lord Jesus, didst thou not take them into thine arms and bless them?

By all that I have written I do not intend to make the impression that the people of the self-styled evangelical sects believe that infants, that die in infancy, will be lost. My object has been to show that this is the doctrine of the creeds, and that the doctrine of hereditary total depravity tends to the conclusion that infants dying in infancy will be lost. Why else do the Methodists, in their baptismal prayer for an infant, invoke God that it, being delivered from his wrath, might be received into the ark of Christ's Church? Do they not seem to act on the principle that if they do not pray for it, and baptize it, it will not be delivered from God's wrath? It would be wrong to charge them with being guilty of an empty, meaningless ceremony; but if they are not guilty, they certainly believe themselves to be using means by which to save the infant from the wrath of God! God, then, is angry with the babe according to the belief of the Methodists. Now suppose it should die without baptism, and under the wrath and curse of God, what would be its destiny? My position is, that those creeds to which I have referred were made in ages of comparative darkness, and those, as a general rule, now under them have greatly outgrown them, and ought so to change them as to bring them to accord with their present views, or else cast them bodily to the moles and the bats; for certainly it is unfair and uncandid to publish a book, as, for example, the Westminster Confession, purporting to contain the faith of the Church, unless the Church believes the articles of faith contained in the book. Until, therefore, they change or repudiate their creeds, we are bound to hold them to the defense of the doctrines which they contain.

The Baptist Philadelphia Confession involves its advocates, in respect to the salvation of in-

fants that die in infancy, as really and as fully as are the Methodists and Presbyterians involved by their creeds. "The infant," say the Baptists, "is totally depraved!" It dies! How can it be saved? If saved, God must regenerate it anterior to death by his Spirit!—a *phantasm*!

MANY OF THE MOST PERNICIOUS DOCTRINES OF THE APOSTACY AND OF SECTARIANISM HAVE GROWN OUT OF THE BELIEF OF THE DOCTRINE OF HEREDITARY TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

This doctrine, either in its modern modified form, or in its original native and unadorned ugliness, is a fundamental doctrine of the "evangelical sects." "The doctrine of total depravity," says Mr. Hendricks, in his letters to 'the self-styled Reformers,' is emphatically fundamental;" and he adds, "the whole plan of salvation is grafted in upon the stock of total depravity." Rev. D. Holmes, A. M., says that "genuine Christianity stands or falls with it;" and, without multiplying proofs, such, I doubt not, is the view taken of this doctrine by all who are accounted soundly orthodox. It is a pinnacle upon which they stand while haughtily they look down upon us with contempt, and brand with heresy those who will not, in some form or other, acknowledge the truth of this doctrine. It is the chief corner stone of the temples of Calvinistic and Arminian sectarianism.. It is to sectarianism what they themselves represent it as being to Christianity. We shall, the Lord being our helper, remove this corner stone and cast it into the abyss whence it came; and whatever may become of sectarian edifices after their acknowledged foundation shall have

been removed, we shall show that the house of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth, built upon the rock Christ Jesus, with heaven's sunshine resting upon its dome, the ark of safety, the city of refuge to weary and heavily-laden souls—the solace of broken-hearted pilgrims in this dark vale of woe! still stands untarnished, unmoved, impregnable! But to the proof of our proposition.

1. Out of the belief of hereditary total depravity has grown the doctrine of infant regeneration. The infant being wholly defiled in all parts of its soul and body, and under the wrath and curse of God, must be regenerated by an abstract operation of the Spirit of God, or into heaven it can never enter! Without knowledge, without faith, without repentance, without loving God or hating him, without having done either good or evil, without knowing its right hand from its left, it must, for the guilt of original or birth-sin, go to hell should it die in infancy, unless regenerated previously to death by the Holy Spirit. What a monstrous figment! It was kind in the Presbyterians to promise the regeneration of "*elect infants*," and in the Methodists to pray at their baptism [rantism] that they might be delivered from "God's wrath;" but who ever saw the evidences of regeneration—the fruits of the Spirit—in an unconscious babe? May it not be, however, that the Bible proves it? The Confession of Faith proofs of this phantasmagoria are, "Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me."—Luke xviii : 15, 16. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins,"—"for the promise is to you and to your children."—Acts ii : 38, 39. Is this all! Yes, reader, in these two passages you have the whole Confession of Faith proof of

infant regeneration! The reader can examine these passages at his leisure.

2. Out of the belief of the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, and the consequent belief of the necessity of infant regeneration, the practice of infant baptism and membership originated: two doctrines which have done more to carnalize and secularize the Church than perhaps all other erroneous doctrines put together. The *fathers* reasoned on this wise: The babe is under the guilt of original sin; and dying without the remission of this sin, can not be saved. Baptism is for the remission of sins. Therefore, baptize the babe for the remission of original sin, and it will be saved. And they had just as much Bible proof for this as any man has for baptizing a babe at all! Their grand error was in believing that the babe was a guilty creature, under the wrath of God, and needing pardon and regeneration in order to salvation. Nor are the Pedobaptist sects wholly rid of this monstrous error of the fathers in the present day. It has descended upon them, in their creeds, as an heirloom. Hence, in the preceding paragraph we have seen the Presbyterians applying the baptism for remission, of the 38th verse of the 2d chapter Acts, in proof of infant regeneration; and if any will read the baptismal service of the Methodist Church, he will see this doctrine standing out in its undisguised and honest nakedness. And John Wesley says, in his doctrinal tracts, in so many words, "By water, yes, by the water of baptism, we are regenerated and born again." This, too, is the doctrine of the church of England and of the Roman Catholics, and, so far as I know, of the Pedobaptist sects generally—at least in so far as their creeds are concerned.

3. These errors led to another. Babes are tender creatures, and it was not at all times deemed

proper to dip them. In addition to this there came up the difficulty of immersing sick persons. Hence sprinkling and pouring came into use as a substitute for dipping. But chiefly, I doubt not, a reason for the change from dipping to sprinkling, was deduced from the delicacy of babes; and not from their delicacy only, but from their liability to strangle when put under water, and the fears and repugnance of mothers under such trying circumstances. But, however these things may be, I can prove by scores of Pedobaptists, as pious and as learned as ever lived, that a change was effected from dipping to sprinkling and pouring. At present I shall quote but two—the great Reformers, Calvin and Luther. Calvin says, “From these words it may be inferred that baptism was administered by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under water. Here we perceive how baptism was administered by the ancients, for they immersed the whole body in water.” “We see from this instance [the baptism of the Eunuch] what was the baptismal rite among the ancients; for they plunged the whole body in the water. Now it is the custom of the minister to sprinkle only the body or head. It is certain that we want nothing that maketh to the substance of baptism. Wherefore the Church did grant liberty to herself since the beginning, to *change* the rite somewhat, excepting the substance.” Luther’s testimony is as follows: “The word baptize is a Greek word. It may be rendered immersion, as when we plunge something in water that it may be entirely covered with water; and though that custom is now *abolished* (notice the word *abolished*) among the generality, (for even children are not immersed, but have a little water poured on them) nevertheless, they ought to be com-

pletely immersed, and immediately drawn out, for the etymology of the word requires it." Reader, do you suppose that these intellectual giants were acquainted with the history of the Church? If so, and if they were honest men, baptism was changed from immersion, to sprinkling and pouring!

4. Thus was the gate of the Church made as wide as the gate of the world. The children were caught, and yoked, by crafty priests, under the pretense of saving them from the wrath of God, "and most grievous torments in hellfire forever," before they were of sufficient age to refuse the evil and to choose the good: totally depraved as they were, they would be acceptable members of a flesh-and-blood church, which might be a world-church, or a church-world if its principles could obtain universal prevalence! Strange that an enormity such as this has, to any extent, resisted the light of the nineteenth century. Out of this grew Popery, with all its despotisms, and persecutions, and abominations. And if we knew all the fears, and distrusts, and heart-aches, of those sprinkled in infancy, within the bounds of Protestant Christendom, it would be perfectly astounding! and the cares, and pastoral visits, and public preachings, of the Pedobaptist clergy, and the turning, and twisting, and circumventing, and sophisticating of these shepherds, to keep their sheep from leaving their respective folds, it would excite the pity of every philanthropist. For myself, I broke the yoke, which was put on me, in the institution of sprinkling; and through God's grace, I feel that I would break a thousand more, rather than be bound by them for one single day! Religion is a personal concern. It is my privilege to obey God, in my own person, and by my own consent, in baptism and every

other divine institution, and to choose the Church in which, in my cool deliberative judgment, I would prefer to have membership.

5. Another sprout from this bitter root—the doctrine of hereditary total depravity—was that the unregenerate had no faculty by which they could read and understand the Scriptures. The Bible was a sealed book to all except the favored few. The multitude must look exclusively to the lips of the priest for knowledge; a fountain sealed, as it regarded scriptural knowledge, as really so as was the Bible! No wonder that darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. From this slumber of ages the trump of Luther awoke multitudes, and turned their expectant eyes and souls hungering and thirsting for the light of life, to the Bible. But the incubus of hereditary total depravity sat with crushing weight upon the bosom of the Reformation. Infant sprinkling and membership were ingrafted upon the reformed Churches. Men were still believed to be, “by the fall, utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually.” The unregenerate were taught that they could do nothing in order to salvation—that they were “passive in regeneration”—that they must await “the effectual call,” the predestined moment of conversion—that the Holy Spirit, not the Word, by a miraculous energy, equal to that which raised Lazarus from the tomb, must renovate their souls, dead in the icy embraces of a resistless native corruption. Under the influence of this teaching, the mind was stupefied—the moral powers were horribly paralyzed. Under many circumstances sinners were discouraged from seeking the Lord, believing that they could do nothing—under others, they were supported in the practice of sin, believing that they were

compelled by their own bad nature to sin. I am persuaded that if all the sins to which the influence of this doctrine has given rise, could be presented to its advocates in one group, their hearts would sadden, their souls would sicken at the sight; and could they look into the world of woe, and contemplate the writhing, the inexpressible agonies, the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, of the myriads who have been plunged into hell through the influence of this doctrine, they would execrate it as they would sin itself, and exterminate it as a libel upon human nature—as a hideous monster, alike the enemy of God and man!

“Those views of religion recommend themselves the best to the corrupt heart of man which supply him with the best excuses and apologies for his defects and sins. For this reason it is that men like to hear their vices referred to a depravity innate and not acquired; as it is only for the consequences of that depravity, which they themselves have acquired, that they do or can feel themselves responsible. They like to hear their want of holiness spoken of as the result of a natural incapacity, rather than of any fault or neglect of their own; because there can be no remorse except with the consciousness that a different course might have been pursued. They like especially to be told that they can do nothing to procure their salvation, or even to prepare themselves for it; as this furnishes them with a sufficient excuse for not attempting it. Abuse a man's nature, and you merely shift the blame of what he does upon the author of this nature. Tell a man he inherits from Adam a totally corrupt nature, and you merely furnish to his hands the very thing he wants—an apology for being as corrupt as he is! Tell a man that, do what he may, he can not alter the decrees of heaven: that if he

is one of the elect, he will be saved, and that if he is not one of the elect he will be damned; and that his own exertions, one way or the other, will not weigh the weight of a feather in the balance; tell him this, preach it as a doctrine to be believed and practiced, and we defy human ingenuity to invent a system better adapted to reconcile the sinner to himself, and lull the conscience asleep. Nothing can afford him a fairer plea for not even attempting a reformation, or encourage him with a better hope should he persist in his vicious courses. If, therefore, neither truth nor usefulness were our object—if our only wish was to please the depraved heart of man, we would immediately become the loudest and warmest advocate of those doctrines which teach man's total depravity, and his inability to do anything for himself. These doctrines supply the sinner with plausible excuses, and apologies, and extenuations for his guilt, of which mankind are far too ingenious in the work of self-exculpation not to take advantage."

AN EXAMINATION OF THOSE SCRIPTURES WHICH ARE SUPPOSED TO PROVE THE DOCTRINE OF HEREDITARY TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

No passage, I presume, is more frequently quoted in proof of hereditary total depravity than Genesis vi: 5. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Also, the 12th verse of this chapter: "And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." I shall, I think, demonstrate unanswerably that this

passage has no reference whatever to *hereditary* depravity.

1. I shall permit Dr. Adam Clarke to describe the character of these antediluvians. "They were flesh, wholly sensual; the desires of the mind overwhelmed and lost in the desires of the flesh, their souls no longer discerned their high destiny. All was corrupt within, and all unrighteous without; neither the science nor practice of religion existed. Piety was gone, and every form of sound words had disappeared. The very first embryo of every idea, the figment of every thought; the very materials out of which perception, conception, and ideas were formed, were all evil; the fountain which produced them, with every thought, purpose, wish, desire and motive, was incurably poisoned—evil without any mixture of good." Is this the character of every unregenerate man, woman and child that has lived since the deluge? If not,—and who will dare to say it is?—the passage is egregiously misapplied, in every instance in which it is used as proof of hereditary total depravity.

2. That these antediluvians were totally depraved, is, I think, beyond reasonable doubt; but, by what means did they become thus depraved? The 12th verse answers this question,—"all flesh has corrupted its way on the earth." They had filled the earth with violence and pollution. It does not say that Adam, by his first sin, had totally corrupted all flesh, which must have been the case upon the supposition that hereditary total depravity is true, but that *ALL FLESH had corrupted itself!* The truth is, that sin had been introduced by our first parents, and by the introduction of the first sin, the mental and moral nature of man had been to some extent injured. Adam's posterity had, in their turn, committed sins, by which the quan-

tum of moral corruption was proportionally increased. Men lived to a very advanced age, and became giants in wickedness. Thus the stream of moral corruption, though at first comparatively small, augmented in its onward course, until it became, first, a river, and then an ocean, and filled the whole earth! The same evil agent that tempted our first parents, assailed with ceaseless vigilance and fury their posterity, until they had become incorrigibly corrupt, and God could no longer behold such monuments of ungodliness—such morally putrid miscreants on the earth. He therefore overwhelmed them with a terrible inundation; and again peopled the earth with a remnant saved by water,—a remnant less corrupt and more righteous than were the people whom he had drowned. But if Noah and his family were by nature totally depraved, then those who were saved in the ark were by nature as morally corrupt, as those who were drowned! On this hypothesis there was the same reason for destroying Noah and his family, that there was for destroying the antediluvians! both parties being by nature equally, that is, totally depraved.

3. I know that there is much depravity in the world, and I bitterly regret the depravity of my fellow-men; but will this justify the extravagance and injustice of applying the text now under consideration, alike to the comparatively innocent female, and the wretch who has brutified himself in sin; to the child of ten years of age, and the man who has grown gray in villainy and crime? The thought outrages our common sense, and all our better feelings! Reader, did you never, during your unregeneracy, think a good thought, nor experience a virtuous feeling? If you never did, I pity you! Did you never? I dread you, as I would dread a demon incarnate! Can Satan himself deserve

a worse description than that which Clarke has justly given of those who lived before the flood? Is this your character? All your imaginations evil, nothing but evil, and that continually! I would blush to look you in the face! I would shrink from your touch as if a serpent had touched me! As soon would I live in a world of infernals, as in such a society as this! Sodom, with its whole world of abominations, could not have afforded a more loathsome society!

4. The corruption of the antideluvians, it is perfectly evident, was contracted *progressively*. During more than sixteen centuries, they had been running the downhill course of moral and mortal degeneracy. At length, just before the deluge, God looked down upon the guilty race, and his emotions, upon beholding the wickedness of man, are expressed in the strong language of Oriental hyperbole:—"It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart!" Why did God repent? and why is he represented as being grieved at the heart? Because Adam, by his first sin, had totally corrupted his posterity! No! The reason is given with perfect explicitness—"all flesh had *corrupted itself*! Can *total corruption corrupt itself*? Can that which is by nature "*wholly* inclined to all evil," become still more inclined to all evil? The passage itself refutes, unanswerably, the lugubrious notions of those who use it in proof of hereditary total depravity.

5. We shall probably be asked, "whether the fact, that all men, from Adam to the present time, having sinned, is not a proof that all men have derived a totally depraved nature from Adam?" The reader will please notice, that we have not denied that all the human family have received great injury from the sin of Adam! We intend to give our views on this subject in its proper place. At present, we

answer, that we can not perceive that the universality of sin affords the shadow of a proof of hereditary depravity, much less of total depravity! Just look at the first sin. Do you not perceive with what readiness it was committed by our first parents, just fresh from the plastic fingers of their Creator, and, consequently free from hereditary taint? Now, if the readiness of all men to commit sin, is a proof that they are by nature totally depraved, why will not the readiness of our first parents to commit sin, prove them to have been totally depraved, before they had ever sinned? "The serpent," you will say, "beguiled them." Very true! But has not the same serpent been at large from that time to the present, to beguile their posterity? Did he not visit with his most powerful assaults the blessed Savior himself? and has he not been, at all times, and in all climes, going about ever since "like a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour?" or as an insatiate archer, pouring upon the human family whole showers of "fiery darts," so that nothing can protect them from utter and eternal ruin but "the whole armor of God?" To the temptation of Satan, therefore, and not to our bad human nature, I attribute, not only the sins of our first parents, but also those of their posterity. But this more fully in another place.

The following passage, in the first chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah, is thought by many to contain conclusive evidence of the truth of the doctrine of hereditary total depravity. "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters. They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they

are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it: but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores," &c.

1. This passage is descriptive of a great national apostacy, and of judgments consequent upon this apostacy. The king and the priests were equally gone away from truth and righteousness. The nation was oppressed by its enemies, corrupted in its rulers and members, and was speedily filling the cup of its iniquities, which would fit it for its awful catastrophe. Their country was to become desolate, their cities to be burned with fire; strangers were to devour their land. So far is the prophet from teaching the doctrine of original sin, in this connection, that he is remonstrating against the national sins of Israel, and warning them against the awful national judgments that God would send upon them! and yet, preachers apply this passage to all mankind! and use it as a proof of original sin, and the total hereditary corruption of the whole family of man!

2. The corruptions of the Israelites, of which God complains in this passage, is not attributed to the sin of Adam, but to their own sins. "They have rebelled against me"—"children that are corrupters"—"they have provoked the Holy One"—"they have forsaken the Lord"—"they are gone away backward." Thus, their whole corruption is attributed to their own evil works, and no part of it to the sin of Adam. Moses had said to them, "I know that after my death you will *utterly corrupt yourselves*."—Deut. xxi, 29; and, in this passage, we learn that anterior to the date of this prophecy of Isaiah, Moses' prophecy had been fulfilled! But could this have been the case, if, by the sin

of Adam, they had been "wholly corrupted," as the creeds express it, "in every faculty of their soul, and in every member of their body." As well might they tell us of charcoal's smutting lampblack, or of Satan's being polluted by a brother devil!!

3. "*Why will ye be stricken any more! Ye will revolt more and more.*" God here represents the great mass of these Israelites, as having corrupted themselves to an excess so desperate as to have become *irreclaimable*. The rod of his chastisements, together with all the other reformatory means, which had been used, had failed to bring them back to that state of loyalty and fidelity from which they had "gone away backward!" He had already beaten them until they were covered with stripes—until their whole head was sick, and their whole heart faint—until, by the inflictions of his correcting rod, they were full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, from the sole of the foot, even unto the head! Having "utterly corrupted" themselves, none but "a remnant" (verse 9,) were in a *salvable* state. Dr. Clarke says, it is as if God had said, "Upon what limb shall you be smitten, if you add defection? for, already, for your sins, have you been smitten upon all of them; so that there is not in you a whole limb upon which you can be smitten; there is no place on you for a new stripe."

4. The wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores of this passage, are usually supposed to be hereditary depravity, or the effects of it: whereas nothing can be more certain than that they are the effects of the divine chastisements. This view of the subject we consider to be essential: because, unless we can, legitimately, suppose all mankind to have been bruised and wounded to the same extent, by the chastisements of the Lord, it follows that the passage under consid-

eration is inapplicable to all mankind. Besides, it represents these Israelites as *morally incurable*! The extending it, therefore, to all mankind, would represent them as in a like *incurable* condition; than which nothing can be more dangerously or preposterously false. Thus we have taken from the temple of Orthodoxy, beyond successful contradiction, two of its main supports! We shall proceed to an examination of others.

“As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They have all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher: with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips,” &c., &c. The reader can read, for himself, the whole context, found in Rom. 3d chap.

1. It can not, in truth, be denied, that at the time at which the apostle penned this passage, the whole world, with comparatively but few exceptions, was deeply immersed in sin. Other descriptions, which he gives, in this epistle, of the moral condition of both Jews and Gentiles, show the depths of sin, into which the whole world—which John represents as lying in, or under the wicked one—had plunged. But what has this to do with hereditary total depravity? They had “corrupted themselves,” as the antediluvians had done, and as in the days of Isaiah, the Jewish nation is represented as having done; and that many of them had “*utterly corrupted themselves*,” I have no reason

to doubt. The Tempter that tempted Eve, had also plied, from time to time, all the inhabitants of the earth, with his temptations, so that they, as well as she, yielded to the power of his machinations. In this way, the passage is, to our mind, easy of interpretation, and of thrilling and solemn import. Far be it from us to detract, in the least, from the turpitude of sin. It will be seen, I trust, before we reach the sequel, that we place the doctrine of depravity, upon a basis, such as is fitted to pierce the sinner with the sharpest convictions and compunctions, for all things, whether of heart or of life, recognized by our Creator, as depravity or sinfulness.

2. Still, after all, this passage has been, and is, much relied upon, as containing conclusive proof of the truth of hereditary total depravity. In the whole connection, however, there is neither affirmation nor negation relative to native depravity. It is of *practical* sinners, not infants, that the above charges are predicated. Who would expect an infant to work, either righteousness or unrighteousness—to understand—to seek God—to go, while an unconscious babe, out of the way—to have a throat like an open sepulcher—a mouth full of cursing and bitterness—the poison of asps under its lips—and its feet swift to shed blood? Certainly, the apostle could have had no reference to infants, whatever.

3. Notice that certain leading words of the passage prove that it was by *progression*, in the practice of sin, that this state of depravity was reached, of which the apostle complains. “They had *gone* out of the way”—had “*become* unprofitable”—had “*become* filthy”—or, as Clarke has it, “*sour or rancid*; a metaphor taken from milk that has fermented, and turned sour, rancid and worthless.” Milk, we know, may be-

come sour, rancid, and worthless ; still, however, rancidity, or sourness, is not predicable of milk as it first makes its appearance from the animal which yields it ! So it is with human nature—sweet in infancy : yet, under the power of satanic temptations it may become a mass of moral putridity. We shall pass to the consideration of other Scriptures.

1. "To be carnally minded is death." "The carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."—Rom. viii : 6, 7. Barnes and M'Knight translate these passages thus : "the minding of the flesh." "The sense is," says Barnes, "that the minding of the flesh, or the corrupt propensities of our nature, lead to condemnation and death. It does not mean the mind itself, the intellect, or the will ; it does not suppose that the mind or soul is physically depraved or opposed to God ; but it means that the minding of the things of the flesh, giving them supreme attention, is hostility against God." And Clarke supposes the "carnal mind" to be not the soul or spirit, as many imagine it to be, but the principle of sin itself. He calls it "the carnal principle," and says, "As it is not subject, and can not be subject to the law of God, it must be destroyed." He also tells us that "it can not be mended or rendered less offensive in its nature *even by the operation of God* : it is ever sin, and sin is ever enmity."

2. If the apostle had meant the mind proper, the unregenerate would have been left in a deplorable condition ; for their mind or intellect being enmity itself, and it being impossible to

subject it, the salvation of the unregenerate would be clearly impossible. The fleshly mind or disposition will go with us to the tomb;—"lusting against the spirit"—carrying on a never-ceasing warfare against the inner man and the Spirit of God; but at death the soul of the saint will be freed from "the body of death," and consequently from the warfare of this principle of fleshly enmity. This will be made more apparent in our remarks on the next Scripture to be considered.

1. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing."—Rom. vii: 18. Why does the apostle use the explanatory phrase, "*that is in my flesh?*" Does it not seem as if he wished to guard his readers against just such a perversion of his words as that of which the advocates of hereditary total depravity are guilty in every instance in which they quote this passage in proof of that doctrine? Paul does not tell us that in his mind, his spirit, there was no good thing! Indeed, he tells us the very reverse of this. "I delight," says he, "in the law of God, after the inner man," and "serve with my mind the law of God." Strange total depravity, this! His outer man—the flesh—"was carnal, sold under sin." "He fought against it;" he would not permit his flesh—the outer man, the body of death—to lead him. This is the Christian warfare. The principles of the divine grace "strengthen the inner man," so that he obtains the mastery over the old, or outer man, and "is led not by the flesh but by the spirit!"

2. Did it never occur to those who quote this text to prove hereditary total depravity, that if the passage means as they suppose, they would prove the great apostle to be totally depraved!—for certainly the apostle uses this passage with reference to himself subsequently to his con-

version? Fleshly principles are *animal*. The reasonable soul should be governed by higher principles than these; and hence, "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."

"And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."—Eph. ii: 1, 3. The reader may, if he pleases, examine the context. 1. Dr. Clarke shows conclusively that the word rendered *nature*, in this passage, often means, in classic use, *second nature*,—as when we say, "habit is a second nature." It also, according to the Doctor, often signifies "*certainly, truly*." And he says, on Rom. ii: 14, where the Gentiles are said to "do *by nature* the things contained in the law," "I rather think that this is its sense here;" "for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, *truly*, or in *effect*, do the things contained in the law." And on the passage under consideration he says, "the words in the text have often been quoted to prove the doctrine of *original sin*; but though that doctrine be an awful truth, it is not, in my opinion, intended here. It is rather found in the preceding words, the *lusts* of the flesh, and the *desires* of the flesh and of the mind. The apostle appears to speak of *evil habits*, as when we say "*habit is a second nature*." And to the same effect is the testimony of Dr. M'Knight. "In the passage under consideration," he says, "*nature* is that second corrupt dead nature, which men form in themselves by habitually indulging vicious inclinations; for the apostle speaks of men being by *nature* children of wrath, as the *effect* of having their conversation in the lusts of the flesh." Thus the reader will perceive that we have learned doctors on our side, who, although they are the uncompromising advocates of hereditary total depravity, yet can not believe that the passage

under consideration has any reference to that doctrine.

2. It ought to be obvious to all, that the unduo or unlawful indulgence of our animal appetites and propensities serves to vitiate or corrupt them. Take, for trial, the appetite for eating or drinking, or the sexual appetite, or any of our propensities or passions, and how easily are they rendered morbid and corrupt by excess! Indeed, it is an every-day occurrence for men to form artificial appetites—the appetite, for example, for ardent spirits, which becomes, in innumerable instances, an all-devouring vortex! May not the apostle, therefore, intend to say that men have become children of wrath by permitting their animal nature to gain the supremacy over their intellectual and moral nature? Taking this for granted, the apostle's words are literally true,—that by nature—the animal nature—men become children of wrath.

3. The phrase “dead in trespasses and sins,” strongly favors the view we have taken of this subject. It was not Adam's sin, in the *singular*, in which these Gentiles were dead, but “in trespasses and in sins,” in the *plural*? The death which they had died, and the wrath of which they had become the subjects, are not represented as being the consequence of one sin but of many sins; and, therefore, the consequence of their own sins. By “walking according to the course of this world,”—“according to the prince of the power of the air,” the universal tempter, of whom I have several times spoken, and “having their behavior in the lusts of the flesh”—the appetites and propensities of the animal nature—they died in sin, and became the subjects of the righteous wrath of the Almighty. There is divine equity in this view of the subject—a something in which the soul reposes, trusting

in, and admiring the wisdom and the goodness, as well as the justice, of the great Creator.

4. But if by being "by nature children of wrath," we are to understand that God's wrath burns with furnace-heat against unconscious babes for being born with a wicked nature, all my cherished views of justice as well as of goodness are confounded! It represents our Maker in a most unamiable point of light? Has any infant ever had power to prevent the origination of its own existence? Has the nature of any infant been in any degree the result of its own will or agency, any more than the color of its skin, or hair, or eyes? By what principle of justice, then, human or divine, can they be condemned on account of their nature? Is an infant any more culpable for being born spiritually than physically blind? For being born an idiot rather than a Sir Isaac Newton? We affirm, then, that the attributing to God wrath against infants is a libel against the Father of Light, as well as against human nature—incongruous with all the revealed perfections of Him "who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works."

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jer. xvii: 8.

1. If the reader will examine the chapter of which this quotation is a part, he will find that the prophet is speaking of the strong bias of the house of Judah to idolatry; and that, consequently, it is the hearts of idolaters, and not of babes, nor yet of mankind generally, that he

makes the above affirmation. Hence, we are informed in the first verse, that "the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altar." Observe: the sin of JUDAH was written, not the sin of ADAM! It was WRITTEN, and, consequently, was not in their hearts by *nature*! There can be no reasonable doubt of the deceitfulness and wickedness of the hearts of a people blessed as had been the Jews by the God of their fathers, who would forsake Him, and plunge into the loathsome abominations of heathen idolatry! What a beautiful game this scrapping of the Scriptures is! It makes the Bible like a musical instrument—every performer may play his own tune!

2. There is, however, a difficulty in this passage which probably the reader has not observed: "the heart is deceitful *above all things*:" above all what things? Does it mean that each heart is more deceitful than every other heart? This is impossible, and would be like each sinner, among the experience-tellers, being the chief of sinners! Does it mean, when it says that the heart is deceitful above all things, that it is more deceitful than the devil? This can not be! What, then, is the point, or what are the points of the comparison? We must again call on Dr. Clarke for assistance. "My old manuscript Bible," says Clarke, "translates thus: 'Shrewd is the heart of man, and unsearchable: who shall know it?' The next verse, to my mind, renders this version very plausible: 'I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins.' The human heart is unsearchable when inspected by short-sighted man, but 'all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do'"—even the deepest and the darkest labyrinths of the human heart.

"The word rendered *wicked*, in this verse," says Clarke, "is never used in Scripture to denote wickedness of any kind." Thus, take the passage either way, and there is not the resemblance of proof in it of the truth of hereditary total depravity.

"But the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii: 14.

1. The word rendered *natural* should, in this place, have been rendered *animal*: but as neither a natural man, nor an animal man, is a babe, or in danger of being mistaken for one, I might, in so far as hereditary depravity is concerned, have passed this passage without notice.

2. Paul's animal man, I conclude, judging from the context, was found both among Jewish bigots, and besotted heathens. "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1 Cor. i: 21. In this honorable group I expect to find Paul's animal man! Go down to the twenty-third verse—"For we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." This proves that the Gospel, which contained, to a great extent, "the things of the Spirit," was foolishness to both Jews and Greeks. Now why was it so? In part because of their religious pride and self-righteousness—in part on account of their impregnable prejudices—and in part on account of their abominable sensuality. The great majority of both Jews and Gentiles were, when the Epistle to the Corinthians was written, in a

state of the vilest, deepest, filthiest carnality. With respect to the moral condition of the Gentiles, read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; and then, in the second chapter, hear Paul answer the question, "Are we Jews better than they?" "*No: in no wise!*" I suppose that the great mass of both Jews and Gentiles had put themselves beyond the reach of the Gospel salvation. That such was the condition of the Jews, the Savior affirms, when he says, "The things that make for your peace are now hid from your eyes"—"ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how *can* ye escape the damnation of hell?" And the apostle, "Behold, ye despisers, wonder and perish!"—"seeing ye count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we turn unto the Gentiles." They had become, "like natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed." And many of the Gentiles are represented as being "past feeling"—swallowed up in the animal propensities and appetites! This, however, was not their state by nature. They had descended to it, as I have already shown in the case of others, by acting the part of the *animal* rather than the *man*—by submitting to the mastery of their brute appetites until it might be said of them, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may they do well who are accustomed to do evil." This is a fearful lesson for such as are living in sensuality, and expecting to be converted by a miracle!

3. To so alarming an extent had these Corinthians depraved themselves, that, even among those who had not sunken below the reach of the gospel, and who had been, consequently, converted, there was still a superabounding carnality. "And I, brethren," says the apostle, within a few verses after what he had written of the natural man, "could not speak unto *you*

as unto *spiritual*, but as unto *carnal*, even as unto *babes* in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able; for ye are yet carnal." From this we infer that the science of Christianity, like every other science, has its rudiments or first principles; and that these rudiments, like the rudiments of other sciences, must be first inculcated on the mind of the learner. Until this is done, he will be incapable of understanding those truths of Christianity which relate to the more refined Christian sympathies, and to the more spiritual exercises of Christian practice. The apostle, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, teaches us that "*strong meat* belongeth to them that are of full age, who by reason of *use* have had their *senses* exercised to *discern both good and evil*." There is a progression *upward* in spirituality, as there is downward in *carnality*. But the chief use to which I wish to apply these reflections at present, is, that even if the converted may, in some instances, perhaps in many, be incapable of being spoken to "as spiritual," what wonder is it if an unregenerate man may so brutify himself, as to be beyond the reach of even the first principles of Christianity. Were this, however the condition of all the unregenerate, there would, of course, be no more conversions; for the preaching of the cross would be to them *only* "a stumbling block," and "foolishness!" To "discern the things of the Spirit," a man must rise above the animal. As a moral agent, endowed with *reason* and *conscience*, he must come to the hearing of God's Word, not as "a filthy dreamer," or as a bigot, but as an honest man, and the word will reach his heart, and "work effectually" within him, so that he may go on from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. Hence, God has said, "Come now,

and let us *reason* together ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool !”

At this stage of our investigation, it may be profitable to the reader to be informed that the advocates of hereditary total depravity greatly rely for proof on certain scriptures, in the prophetic books, which are highly figurative or hyperbolical. The luxuriance of nature in the East, the serenity and delicious fragrance of the air, the loftiness, grandeur, and magnificence of the heavens, all conspire to render the imagination of the inhabitants of the East, more vivid, more poetical and sublime, than is the imagination of the people of any other country. Hence, their poetic effusions abound with the utmost exuberance of tropes and figures, with the greatest luxuriance of all the flowers of rhetoric. Even by the poverty of their language, which has by some authors been called a “material language,” the Hebrews were compelled to the use of numerous figures of speech,—such, for example, as the following: “I am a worm, and no man.” “Thou didst make me to hope when I was on my mother’s breast.” “I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint ; my heart is like wax ; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.” “I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me.” “And my bones are consumed.” “All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee.” “Verily, verily, man in his best estate is altogether vanity.” “All nations are before God as nothing, and they are less than nothing, and vanity.” “He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.” “He (God) shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.”

And "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." The intelligent reader well knows that the poetical scriptures are richly adorned with figures such as those presented in this paragraph.

The following passages are relied upon as conclusive proof of hereditary total depravity: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. lvii: 5. "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Ps. lviii: 3, 4. "For I know that thou wast called a transgressor from the womb." Isai. xlvi: 8.

1. If we interpret these passages literally, they can prove no more than hereditary depravity. There is nothing affirmed in any one of them, with regard to the degrees of moral defilement. How, then, can it with any propriety be said, that they prove that hereditary depravity is total?

2. There are features belonging to these passages which prove them to be hyperbolical. "The wicked go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Is this literally true? Do the wicked speak either truth or lies as soon as they are born? What transgressions do they commit within one day, or one year after birth? When a person is charged with crime, it is certainly necessary to specify his crime. I admit that children sin, so soon as they speak lies!—but I attribute this, not so much to a corrupt nature, as to the temptations of Satan—temptations powerful enough to overthrow our sinless first parents!

3. Still it will be objected that David was "shapen in iniquity—conceived in sin." Might not the sin in which David was shapen and conceived, have been, not in himself, but in the people or generation among whom he was born?

Acts ii: 8, will illustrate my meaning—"and now hear we every man in our own tongue *wherein we were born?*" Was the tongue, or language wherein they were born, in them, at or previously to birth? Is speech or language natural to man? No more was the sin in which David was shapen and born. Through the power of Satanic temptations sin everywhere abounded; it was as common among the people among whom he was born, as household words; so that it may, with as little exaggeration, be said of David, that he was shapen in iniquity, as of others that they were born in a tongue!

4. "A transgressor from the womb,"—not, then, a transgressor five thousand years previously to birth! They "go astray" not previously to birth, but "as soon as they are born." Astray from what? From hereditary total depravity? Certainly we did not stray from a state of innocence, unless we were born in innocence. According to the creeds, we became transgressors in Adam, so that his guilt was imputed to all his posterity; but according to the Scriptures under consideration, no sin is imputed, except such as we commit subsequently to birth; so that these Scriptures directly disprove the doctrine which they are quoted to prove.

"The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Eccl. viii: 11. But little more is necessary by which to show that this text does not prove hereditary total depravity, than the quoting of the whole verse. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Why is the heart of the sons of men set in them to do evil? Because, say the evangelicals, they are by nature totally depraved! "Because," says Solomon, "sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily."

Reader, if you take the sects to be wiser than Solomon, follow them! but if you conclude that Solomon is the wiser, follow him!

"Yea, also, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live." The twenty-ninth verse of the seventh chapter explains this. "Lo, this *only* have I found, that God made man *upright*; but they have sought out many inventions." The word MAN is here used generically; it means man in general—the race. God made man—the whole family of man—upright, but *they*, man in general, have sought out many inventions. Nothing can be plainer than that God charges no sin against man in these Scriptures, but his own personal offenses!

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him." Prov. xxii: 15. "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Prov. xxix: 15. These passages, generally used in proof of hereditary total depravity, prove directly the reverse! The creed advocates teach that nothing short of the direct power of the Spirit can subdue depravity; but Solomon teaches, that the rod of correction has efficacy to drive the foolishness, which is bound up in the heart of a child, far from him. Now, if this foolishness is hereditary total depravity, as the evangelicals teach, the *rod* has more efficacy than the *Spirit*! For, in so far as the Spirit is concerned, that which is natural to man, will remain with him till death.

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job xiv: 14. "What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of woman, that he should be righteous?" Job xv: 14. These are bold examples of Scripture hyperbole, as are also the several passages to which our

attention has been called in this section; but to put this beyond dispute, just read the verse immediately following the last quoted. "Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, *the heavens are unclean in his sight.*" And again: "Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly." Job iv: 18. Now, if these passages are to be taken in their unfigurative signification, the angels are fools, and the heavens unclean! And, as out of an unclean thing a clean thing can never come, it follows that a clean thing has never come out of heaven; nay, the very heavens and the angels are totally depraved. Thus is proved the total depravity of the heavens, and of angels, by precisely the same rules of interpretation by which the clergy attempt to prove hereditary total depravity!

"For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Thus, ladies, are you complimented by grave divines! But the reader should know, that the assimilating of a mother to a wild ass, and her babe to a wild ass's colt, is not the work of God, but of the Rev. Mr. Zophar, one of Job's false friends, whom God had convicted of falsehood, and of the self-dubbed evangelical clergy of the nineteenth century!

In many of those passages in which the word *death* occurs, the advocates for hereditary total depravity suppose that they have abundant proof of this doctrine; and they have much to say of *spiritual death*, and of *moral death*; phrases which are nowhere used in the Scriptures. They think, in this way, to prove that all the moral powers of man are, by nature, morally or spirit-

ually inert; so that nothing short of that power by which the literally dead are raised, is adequate to give life and activity to the souls of the unregenerate. Let us give this argument a brief examination.

When a word is used figuratively, it is often used in but a part of its meaning. Many examples might be given; but if we fully demonstrate this position from the Scripture use of the word death, other examples will be unnecessary. Take, then, what is said to the Church at Sardis: "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Rev. iii: 1. Here the word death is applied to a Christian church; but was this Church dead to the full extent of the meaning of the word, when applied to the literally dead? Certainly not. In proof of this read the next verse. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die," etc. Now here was a Church, said to be dead, but yet capable of "watching," and of "strengthening"—and finally, we are informed that there were somethings among them not dead, but only "ready to die." It is evident, therefore, that this Church was not spiritually dead, as a man is physically dead when we deposit his cold, lifeless remains in the grave. The word *dead* is used *comparatively*, and not in the whole of its meaning.

The Christian is said to be "dead unto sin;" but though dead in this sense, this death does not place him in a state such as unfits him for being operated upon by such influences as might induce him to sin! Why, then, should it be thought that a death in sin places its subject in a state such as unfits him for being operated upon by those moral means, which are productive of righteousness? A person dead to sin feels many temptations—feels the law of sin and of death working and warring in his members.

Why, then, by parity of reasoning, may not a person, dead to righteousness, feel many strong inducements to the doing of good? The temptations of a Christian, although he is dead to sin, require not miraculous operations in order to their production: why, then, should miraculous operations be thought necessary to excite righteous emotions in those dead to righteousness? Now, as we do know that unregenerate men do frequently feel strong inducements to good, and that regenerate men feel strong inducements to evil, if the inducements to good, felt by unregenerate men, are not a proof that there is some good in them, the inducements to evil, felt by regenerate men, can not be taken as proof that there is any evil in them. But as the one is a proof that there is evil in the regenerate; so the other is a proof, by exact parity of reasoning, that there is good in the unregenerate—*ergo*, unregenerate men are not dead, in the sense of the creeds!

When Paul says “ye are dead to sin,” he means that the righteous had lost their taste for the practice of it—did not serve sin—sin was not their master: so, when a sinner is said to be dead to righteousness, the meaning is, that he has not a taste for the practice of righteousness—does not serve righteousness—righteousness is not his master. So, also, when a person is said to be “dead to the law,” the meaning is, that he is “free from the law”—does not live in the performance of its obsolete ordinances. When a person is said to be “dead to the world,” the meaning is, that he is not conformed to it—has lost his taste for its vanities and follies, and has “been transformed by the renewing of his mind.”

In Scripture language, neither death nor life, when used with reference to moral states and changes, can signify either the extinction or

creation of any of our natural powers. As when a grain of wheat dies, its vegetative substance is transferred from one identity to another; so, when we die to sin, and become alive to righteousness, or die to righteousness, and become alive to sin, our natural powers are transferred from one moral sphere to another. Conversion consecrates, but does annihilate our natural faculties, nor does it create new ones. Just as we have the same hands, feet, tongue, &c., after conversion, that we had before: so we have the same memory, judgment, imagination, and the same moral sense or faculty of conscience, after conversion, as before. The rust and mildew of sin are washed from off our souls, in conversion, and our faculties are enlightened by the living Word, and the current of our affections are directed to those things which are divine and eternal: but still the converted will retain all his natural characteristics: and, reader, mark this, that no matter what may be the pretensions of those who profess to be changed from "nature to grace," you will find a great deal of *human nature*, and, frequently, not in its most amiable developments, in the converted, as well as in the unconverted! Were not the Christian babes at Corinth "*yet carnal*?" 1 Cor. iii: 1, 2, 3.

I shall conclude this section with a passage in Eph. v, 14. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." In this passage, as in many others, *sleep* and *death* are used as signifying one and the same thing: and yet we know, that between these two states, literally, there is only a distant or comparative similarity. There is also a distant or comparative similarity between these states, and the moral state of a sinner; and hence their figurative application to the sinner. Upon this principle, either of these terms is ap-

plicable, not only to the sinner, but, as we have seen, to the lukewarm Christian. But, if men are as dead, by nature, as the creeds represent them, it would be abhorrent, both to common sense and piety, to command them to arise! As well command the tenants of the graveyard to arise! O what enormous follies have been perpetrated under the garb of religion, and by the authority of human creeds and Confessions of Faith!

PHYSICAL AND MORAL LIKENESS.

Like, we are told, always produces like.—“Adam begat a son in his own likeness.” In his natural likeness, we would say; not in his moral likeness. A purely natural cause, abstractly from all moral causes, can never produce a moral effect: if it could, might we not suppose that good men would invariably become the fathers of good children, and bad men of bad children? Will an animal that has been spoiled in the training, necessarily become the progenitor of a spoiled progeny? But hark! is Adam the father of the souls or spirits of his posterity? Dr. Owen, a man sternly orthodox, thinks that he is not. “Having,” says the Doctor, “formed his body of the dust of the earth, he creates for him a distinct animating soul, and infuses it into the matter prepared for its reception; and as he did thus in the creation of the human species at first, he continues so to do in the ordinary course of his providence for the continuation of it: for, having ordained the preparation of the body by generation, he immediately infuses into it the living soul, the breath of life.”—*Owen on the Spirit,*

p. 130. And Matthew Henry, a great Presbyterian expositor, is, also, fully to our purpose. "See," says he, "what man is: he is a spirit in flesh: a soul embodied: a creature wonderfully compounded of heaven and earth. See what God is: he is the God of the spirits of all mankind. He forms the spirit: he fathers it." Heb. xii, 9. The obvious conclusion from these premises is, that if "like begets like," and God is the father of our spirits, our spirits are in the image of God: and if so, beyond rational contradiction, not by nature totally depraved.

But, let us hear Henry again on this subject. "For in the image of God made he man at first. Man is a creature dear to his Creator, and, therefore, ought to be so to us. God put honor upon him; let us not, then, put contempt upon him. Such remains of God's image are still upon fallen man, as that he who unjustly kills a man, defaces the image of God, and does dishonor to him. When God allowed men to kill their beasts, he forbade them to kill their slaves, for these are of a much more noble and excellent nature; not only God's creatures, but his image. James iii, 9. All men have something of the image of God upon them," &c. Expo. Gen. viii, 7. Thus, is the native total depravity of the creeds, effectually and forever overthrown!—a bugbear—a raw-head—and bloody-bones, with which to frighten grown up children!! Orthodoxy against orthodoxy! The giant hands of its own great doctors, unwittingly, pulling the bottom corner stone from under the dilapidated edifice!

Dr. A. Clarke, also, shall contribute a mite in this work of justice and philanthropy. "A large volume would be insufficient to contain what we know of the excellence and perfection of man, even in his degraded, fallen state. Both his body and soul are adapted with astonishing

wisdom to their residence and occupations; and also to the place of their residence, as well as the surrounding objects, in their diversity, color, and mutual relations, to the mind of this lord of the creation. The contrivance, arrangement, action and reaction of the different parts of the body, show the admirable skill of the wondrous Creator; while the various powers and faculties of the mind, acting on, and by, the different organs of the body, proclaim the soul's divine origin, and demonstrate that he who was made in the likeness and image of God, was a transcript of his own excellency, destined to know, love, and dwell with his Maker through all eternity."—*Com. Gen. i, 28.*

I doubt not, that, had I time and inclination, I could collect from hundreds of theological writers, testimonies similar to those quoted in this article—that the spirit of man comes not from earthly, but from heavenly parentage, and is therefore in the image of God. Defiled, it is, by sin, in the persons of all personal sinners; and, therefore, needs the saving truth to cleanse it, and the atoning blood as an expiation for its guilt; yet, still, it is of heavenly origin, capable of heavenly aspirations, thirsting for immortality, and having a nature which only God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and heaven, and the beatific vision of Him who sitteth upon the Eternal Throne can satisfy!

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
 How complicate, how wonderful is man!
 How passing wonder, He who made him such!
 Who centered in our make such great extremes!
 From different natures marvelously mixed,
 Connection exquisite of different worlds!
 Distinguished link in being's endless chain!
 Midway from nothing to the Deity!
 A beam ethereal, sullied and absorbed!
 Though sullied and dishonor'd still divine!
 Dim miniature of greatness absolute!

An heir of glory, a frail child of dust!
 Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
 A worm!—a god! I tremble at myself,
 And in myself am lost."

We sometimes say that "extremes meet." This is verified between Orthodoxy and Infidelity. The infidel represents man as only a species of superior brute. The orthodox advocates for hereditary total depravity, although he teaches that man has, within him, an immortal spirit, yet supposes it buried so perfectly in hereditary corruption, as that he is powerless in all spiritual good, until the miracle of conversion is wrought upon him!—just as powerless as if he were a mere animal! Here, then, let them shake hands in their mutual abuse of human nature! In one point of view, however, the position of the infidel is the more reasonable of the two:—the infidel supposes that as man is compelled, from his low animal nature, to do what men call evil, he is not to blame, while the orthodox hold men as infinitely culpable for doing what their bad nature compels them to do!—nay, as deserving most "grievous torments in hellfire forever," for what their first father did thousands of years before they were born! He ate a sour grape—a proverb no more to be used in Israel—and it set his children's teeth on edge, until the latest generation of mankind!!

REASONS FOR NOT BELIEVING THE DOCTRINE OF
HEREDITARY TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

1st. *If this doctrine be admitted to be true, then the worst of the unregenerate are as good as the best.* The Baptist creed declares that by Adam's first sin, "we were made *opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.*" And the Presbyterian says that our "*whole nature was corrupted*" by this sin. Now, if this is true, is not every unregenerate man as bad as Satan? Yes, mothers, those smiling babes, which, with delight so exquisite, you press to your fond and sympathizing bosoms, are, according to these creeds, *wholly corrupt and wholly inclined to all evil.* Except you can imagine some person to exist, who is *more* than *wholly* inclined to all evil, you can not imagine any person to exist who is worse than these creeds represent your babes to be! Are you prepared for this? Can you look on the face of your child, and then, with a good conscience, subscribe a creed which contains so monstrous a doctrine? We are astonished that rational men ever admitted so great an absurdity! What! must we look upon our unregenerate friends, relatives and neighbors, as *wholly inclined to all evil*? Must the husband consider his kind, his affectionate, his generous, though unregenerate wife, as a devil incarnate? Rather would we say, that among the unregenerate there is a great diversity of dispositions and characters. Not more numerous are the tints in nature than are the shades of human character. It is probable that no two children have ever yet been born into the world with precisely the same disposition. Their dispositions probably differ as much as do their countenances, which could not be were they all wholly inclined to all evil; for

then the dispositions of all of them would be precisely alike! that is, totally depraved!!!

That all unregenerate men are not equally, and, consequently, not totally depraved or wholly inclined to all evil, we will now prove from the Scriptures, by a few out of the many passages which might be adduced. Paul says that "evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*." Now, it must be admitted that evil men and seducers are unregenerate men. How, then, can these men, by nature totally depraved, become *worse and worse*? Worse than totally depraved? Worse than wholly inclined to all evil? Impossible! Every reader, who is not blind, can certainly perceive that if bad men can become *worse*, they are not by nature *totally depraved*!

But we have other proofs to the point. "And the Lord said, Thy people (meaning the Jewish nation) which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have *corrupted themselves*."—Deut. ix: 12. Moses says, that "they have *corrupted themselves*; their spot is not the spot of his children."—Deut. xxxii: 5. But more fully to the point is the following declaration from the mouth of Moses: "For I know that after my death you will *utterly corrupt* yourselves."—Deut. xxi: 29. Need we inform the reader that Moses certainly did not consider the Jewish nation as *utterly corrupt* at the time in which he spoke these words? He charges them with corrupting themselves, and evidently supposes them to be in a state of *progressive* corruption, which would eventuate in *utter* or *total corruption* after his death. Like the evil men and seducers of Paul, they were waxing worse and worse, and might finally become totally depraved!

If the reader is not yet convinced, we will give him one more testimony, which we think irresistible. "Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, (Sodom and Samaria,) bear thine own

shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: *they are more righteous* than thou."—Ezekiel xvi: 52. Now, gentle reader, if this testimony does not convince you that all unregenerate men are not totally depraved, and that some unregenerate men are worse than others, we shall despair of ever convincing you of anything!—we shall recommend medicine, or a physician, as more suitable to your complaint than testimony!

2d. *We do not believe the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, because man is a rational being.* The Scriptures speak of the reason of man, the reason of God, and of the Christian religion, as possessing congenial principles. "Come, now," says God to man, "and let us reason together." The result of this reasoning was to be the canceling of the sins of the man who would reason with his Maker. "Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool." Men, by acting reasonably, do not act in opposition to God. The reason of God is the highest reason in the universe; and is, in so far as revelation has made it known, a guide for the exercise of our reason. When the reason of man, which may be denominated the mind's eye, is illuminated by the revelation which has proceeded from the reason of God, and our soul, body, and spirit are actuated and controlled by the rays of this celestial light, we become "imitators of God." Under no other circumstances can we be said to act reasonably! Obedience to this revelation is hence declared to be "our reasonable service." Hence, also, it is said, that "Paul reasoned with Felix." The exercises of Paul's mind were legitimate productions of God's own revelations, and, therefore, rational exercises—things which they could not have

been had they been in any measure counter to the dictates of the Divine Reason!

If, however, the reason of man is totally depraved—if it is a mere satanic germ—if it is not that noble principle which we have just represented it to be, how has it come to pass that its legitimate exercises are so entirely compatible with the exercises of the Divine reason? If the reason of unregenerate men is *wholly depraved*, would not its legitimate exercises be open and eternal rebellion against God? But that the exercise of the reason of unregenerate men is not rebellion against God, is evident from the words of Paul in which he prays “to be delivered from *unreasonable* and wicked men.” These men were, it seems, wicked, because they were *unreasonable*—refused to render to God their “*reasonable service*;” therefore, it is as clear as demonstration, that the reason of man is not by nature totally depraved; and if not, then human nature is not totally depraved.

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says: “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened.” That which is sometimes called the “soul’s eye,” and sometimes “the discursive faculty,” is here, called “the eyes of your understanding.” The gospel was the light by which this “eye” was illuminated, and was as well adapted to this

* If the reason of man is totally depraved, then, while ever he acts in conformity with it, he must act counter to the reason of God. There must, in this case, be a fearful discordance between human and divine reason! If, then, this discordance really exists, man, in order to act compatibly with Divine reason, must act counter to his own! Paul, therefore, ought to have prayed to be delivered from “*reasonable* and wicked men!!!” and the Christian religion ought to have been denominated “*our unreasonable service!!*”

moral or mental organ, as physical light is to our natural eye. Hence, it became a medium through which they saw or understood the things of God. But, had this "eye" been dead, that is, blind by nature, of what benefit could the light have been to them? We learn from the testimony of Jesus Christ, that the Jews, in order to avoid seeing, when the truth was presented to them, resorted to an astonishing expedient. It was just this! They "shut their eyes!!" Yes, said Jesus, "*your eyes ye have closed*"—"lest ye should be converted!!" But, if their "eyes" were "dead" or blind, they could have seen as well with them *shut as open!!*

We do not intend to deny that men, by a long continuance in the practice of wickedness, may render their mental "eye" unfit for the reception of moral light. We think that the mental as well as the physical eye may become blind; this, however, is not its natural condition. We conclude, therefore, that, as men are reasonable beings, and as the faculty of reason is an attribute in the exercise of which we imitate God, and render him our services, those who are possessed of this attribute are not the subjects of hereditary total depravity.

3. *We do not believe the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, because unregenerate men are capable of the exercise of conscience.* We will present but two passages out of the many in proof of this point. 1 Tim. iv: 2. "Having their *conscience seared* with a hot iron." Rom. ii: 15. "Their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their *thoughts* the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another."

That men have a conscience from a very early period of their lives, is a fact, which requires no other proof than every man's own consciousness. We think also, that we do not mistake, when we say that those persons who are unhack-

neyed in the ways of vice, are more tender in conscience and more capable of its vigorous exercise, than are older and more hardened sinners, and that correct information or a knowledge of the truth is also a pre-requisite to its healthful and vigorous exercise. The gentiles, who had not the law, had, nevertheless, some knowledge of good and evil; and if any of them were for the most part destitute of this knowledge, we have a reason for it in the first chapter of Romans. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God;" "and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up," etc. In proportion to the true knowledge which they possessed, was the ability with which their conscience was endowed to be a faithful "witness;" but if, "not liking to retain God in their knowledge," they persisted in refusing to hearken to this inward monitor, it became "seared with a hot iron," its remonstrances were hushed, and its unhappy subjects given over to a hard heart and a reprobate mind! Nothing is more certain, we think, than that young persons, when they begin to run into the criminal excesses of the baser sort of men, experience the most exquisite twinges of conscience, which, after hardening themselves in crime, they never again experience.

But on the supposition that the doctrine of hereditary total depravity is true, these things could not so be. If all men are by nature totally depraved, can the *heart be hardened*? Can the *conscience be seared*? Upon the hypothesis of hereditary total depravity, is not the heart and conscience of the novitiate in sin as much depraved as are the heart and conscience of the veriest reprobate? If the creeds are true, are not all unregenerate men, from their birth, "wholly corrupt," and "inclined to evil continually?" — Where, then, shall we find in unregen-

erate men those conscientious throbbings, those deep convictions, those midnight sighings, which, perhaps, all unregenerate men have felt? Does not the existence of these feelings and emotions indicate the existence of something in the nature of man which is not wholly corrupt? What is that which feels so acutely—which aches so horribly, if the whole nature of man is morally dead? Does conscience grasp mere rottenness and corruption, and make it feel horror and remorse in the contemplation of sin, when the whole man is but sin personified? Impossible! If the doctrine of native total depravity were true, instead of feeling remorse for sin, we should thirst after it incessantly, and that, too, with intense and irresistible desire; and sin would be so congenial with our whole nature, that in no part of it could there be any repugnance to sin; and, consequently, there could be no conscience?*

Suppose, if you please, a person to have so far depraved himself, as to be “past feeling,” would this man be more than totally depraved? You answer in the negative. Well, then, it follows irresistibly, that those who are not yet “past feeling,” whose conscience is not totally “seared,” are not yet totally depraved.

4. *We do not believe the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, because Christians are said to have been saved “by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit;” Titus iii: 5, and because the Gospel process of salvation is said to be*

* Paul says, Acts xxiii: 1, “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” The apostle, here, refers to the whole of his past life. Now, if Paul, anterior to his conversion, was totally depraved, how could he have had a good conscience? Again: can total sinfulness feel remorse? Can a totally wicked or depraved conscience rebuke a sinner for his wickedness? Surely this would be the devil chiding sin! Surely this would be Satan divided against himself!

"like the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap." If human nature is "wholly corrupt," it is neither a proper subject of a *washing*, nor of a *refining*! Can you refine a mass which is wholly dross? Can you wash that clean which is wholly corrupt? Certainly this is impossible! For if you remove, by washing, the whole of the corrupt or unclean particles, there will be nothing remaining! A woman may wash a polluted garment until it shall be clean, because the material and texture of the garment are good; and a refiner may remove, by the refining process, the dross from a mass of metal; but, if there were no metal in this, nor substantial material in that, these processes must prove infallibly abortive! So would it be with human nature, were it "wholly corrupt." Remove if you please, by any process, all the corrupt particles from a man who is "wholly corrupt," and no one particle of the man will remain. He will have been utterly decomposed. Nor can this argument be eluded by the phrase, the "Renewing of the Holy Spirit." For if human nature is indeed "wholly corrupt," there is nothing in it capable of being renewed. We know that the Scriptures speak of "a new creation;" but then we also at the same time know that an absolutely new creation is not salvation. A metallic vessel may be made new, by melting and casting it into a proper mold; dross, however, can not be so renewed—nothing but metal is capable of this process. Just so it is with human nature. It must be melted by the love of heaven: it must be rendered perfectly penitent; then it may be cast into the gospel mold, and it will come out of this mold clean and brilliant—properly a new vessel! But if human nature is "wholly corrupt"—if it is wholly dross, by no process of melting and casting can it be renewed. For it will be dross, nothing but dross, through every

process! And if, instead of melting, refining, and casting the old material, you melt and cast a new metal, you have not refined nor saved the old; therefore, if human nature is wholly corrupt, and if total corruption cannot be renewed or saved, then there is in truth no such thing as salvation! This argument, had we but this one, might, we think, suffice to prove to all men the utter futility of the doctrine of hereditary total depravity.

5th. *We do not believe the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, because Jesus assimilates human nature to meal, and his Gospel to leaven.* The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matthew xiii: 33. "Let your light," said Jesus, "so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your father who is in heaven." Thus will "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord ultimately cover the whole earth;" yes, through the instrumentality of the saints, all the nations will be enlightened;—the whole mass will be leavened in pursuance to the benevolent designs of the founder of the Christian religion.

But, if human nature is totally depraved, why did Jesus assimilate it to meal, and his Gospel to leaven? And why did he evidently suppose human nature to be so very susceptible of good impressions, as to be capable of being constrained to glorify God, through the influence of the good works of Christians? If human nature is what the creeds represent it to be, as soon might a heap of ashes be leavened by ordinary leaven, as human nature through the influence of Christian example! But as Jesus Christ does evidently and most irresistibly teach us to influence or leaven men in this way, as well as by the Word, we are warranted in using

this, as another reason for not believing the doctrine of hereditary total depravity.

6th. *We do not believe the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, because God is said "to love the world."* But if God loves the world, and the world is "wholly corrupt," God loves total corruption; or, which is the same thing, he loves that which is "wholly corrupt!" Is the reader prepared for this? We shudder at the idea! Is it within the power—is it consistent with the nature of any being, or rather, is it not contrary to the nature of all beings, to love any object, where there is nothing in the object beloved congenial with the nature of the lover of it? "Sin," for instance, is a thing which the "soul of the Lord hates." But, if the nature of man is "wholly corrupt," it must be wholly sinful; and if wholly sinful, it must be wholly hateful* to God; therefore, if human nature is "wholly corrupt," God can not love it; but must hate it with a perfect hatred! As then God "loved the world," he must have seen in human nature an intrinsic value, rendering it worthy of being loved.

Will any person say that human nature does not possess intrinsic value? How often have we heard even the advocates for the total corruption of human nature tell sinners "that their immortal, never-dying souls were worth more

* Calvin's Institutes, Book 4th, chap. 15th, sec. 10, page 628. "Therefore, these two points are distinctly to be marked, namely, that we being in all parts of our nature defiled and corrupted, are already, for such corruption ONLY holden worthily condemned, and convicted before God, etc., yea, and VERY infants themselves bring their own damnation from their mother's womb; who although they have not yet brought forth the fruits of their iniquity, yet have the seeds thereof inclosed within them; yea, their whole nature is a certain seed of sin; therefore, it can not but be hateful and abominable to God; the faithful are certified that by baptism this damnation is taken away from them."

than a thousand worlds." Now, if human souls are so valuable as this declaration imports, and are wholly corrupt, corruption must be, in the sight of God, exceedingly valuable!! We may also say that the price given for the redemption of human nature was far, very far too great, on the supposition of total depravity; for if indeed human nature is wholly corrupt, the redemption of it would be but the redemption or purchasing of that which is in itself valueless!

7. *We do not believe the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, because a state such as this would not only unfit us for the operation of the Word, but for the operation of the Spirit also!* The operation of the Spirit upon human nature, if it were wholly corrupt, would be like the operation of the rays of the sun upon a carcass! In what way a spiritual operation could be at all beneficial to a person placed in a situation such as this, is to our mind wholly inconceivable. According to the riddle of Samson, meat could come out of the eater, and sweet out of the strong; that is, honey could come out of the carcass of the dead lion, because it had been previously deposited there; but how something can be extracted from nothing would puzzle a Jesuit to explain. We make these observations here, in order to inform those who charge us with denying the operations of the Holy Spirit, that their own much-loved doctrine of hereditary total depravity would, if it were true, render all spiritual operations useless.

8. *We do not believe in the doctrine of hereditary total depravity, because, on the supposition that all mankind have been depraved to this extent by the first sin of Adam, they are not accountable creatures.* An idiot is not an accountable being. Why? Because he has no moral powers. But as well might an idiot be damned for want of conformity to the divine law, as any other unre-

generate person, if unregenerate persons in general have no more moral power than idiots. God has told us that "He is not a hard master, reaping where He has not sown." He only requires the improvement of that which he gives us—whether one talent, two, five, or none! If, then, he has not given to unregenerate men an ability to obey him, they are not accountable! God, from the beginning of the world, has been exceedingly careful to cherish within his creatures a principle of conscious accountability. Hence, He placed the very first man under law, and required of him strict obedience; and, from that to the present time, he has been cherishing the very same principle in all people, to whom his Word has been administered: and his service has always been "a reasonable service." Moses, the Prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles, all cherished this principle—all talked to man, not concerning human inability, but the necessity of obedience. Read Christ's sermon on the Mount. Does he not preach to the people as if he thought they could obey? And do not the apostles, in their sermons in the book of Acts, evidently suppose that their hearers had the power of obedience? We shall, perhaps, be told that man had power enough given him in Adam to obey God's law perfectly; but that as Adam was our head and representative, and lost that power by disobedience, his posterity are infinitely to blame! This, however, is altogether gratuitous. Not the shadow of a proof have we ever seen of the truth of this assumption. The supposing that God gave to Adam, to have and to hold, in the capacity of a representative, our power of individual obedience, is perfectly gratuitous. But suppose, if you please, for one moment, this to be a fact! Will this fact justify God in keeping the whole affair a profound secret from his crea-

tures, while he is continually importuning them to obey his commandments, and pretending as though they had power to obey. Add to this, that according to Calvinism, God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and consequently foreordained the sin of Adam, and that all mankind should lose, by his sin, the power of personal obedience. Strange! strange! if this is the case, that God should be so infinitely angry with our helpless race! But, as in the parable of the talents, we are taught that God is not a hard master—that he requires of every one according to—not above his ability, we are warranted in the conclusion, that the Calvinistic doctrine of human inability is a figment of some visionary brain, and not the doctrine of the Bible. We do not believe, however, that human ability is self-originated. God, in a measure, such as his wisdom dictates, bestows it upon every accountable being; so that it is all of grace; yes, if you please, it is all of *sovereign grace*!

ORIGINAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The sects have much to say of *original* righteousness. And they tell us, that "mankind are, by nature, far gone from original righteousness." If, by this, they mean that man has been injured in his whole organization, physical, intellectual, and moral, we do not object to the sentiment. We do still, however, object to the phraseology.

Will any person, no matter how orthodox, affirm, that Adam, even had he never sinned, would have been capable of propagating, by ordinary regeneration, into the minds of his chil-

dren, *truth, knowledge, righteousness*? If not, it must be admitted that his children would have been, at birth, as ignorant as ours: and, although their whole organization might have been perfect, still, as it relates to truth and knowledge, they would have been as much the subjects of *privation* as are our children; and, therefore, upon the supposition that they would become the subjects of temptation, liable to sin, because liable to temptation:—for the first temptation was more than equal to the resisting energy of our *sinless* first parents! But, if any person shall say, that Adam, had he not sinned, would have propagated by natural generation, truth, knowledge, and righteousness, into the minds of his children, so that at birth, if not before, their minds would have been endowed with inexhaustible stores of divine knowledge, he will confer a favor by giving us some Scripture proof, or by communicating to some philosophical society the principles upon which this physical, moral, and intellectual transmission could have been effected!

Are knowledge, truth, and righteousness, parts or constituents of human nature? Certainly not. They can not, then, be derived physically by children from parents. A moral power must operate upon their minds through the medium of correct teaching, before these intellectual and moral effects can be produced. Even Adam was totally destitute of knowledge until instructed by his Maker. His knowledge was not created of the dust; nor was it the breath of life by which he became a living soul! What accountability had he, until he became the subject of law? What righteousness, before his Maker instructed him? Until he became the subject of law, he was destitute of original righteousness; and until he became the recipient of knowledge, as destitute of accountability

as the dust under his feet, or the weakest babe of his posterity.

It should be known that destitution of a principle does not always imply the possession of its opposite. Yonder beautiful lamb is destitute of holiness, but is not unholy; of righteousness, but is not unrighteous; of faith, but is not an infidel; of patriotism, but is not unpatriotic. Do you say that the lamb is not an accountable creature, and therefore affords no grounds for a suitable analogy? Neither is the babe an accountable creature. It does not love God, nor does it hate him; it does not believe the Gospel, nor does it disbelieve it. In a moral point of view, it is neither good nor bad—it is neither righteous nor wicked. *To love the Lord with all our might, is the law and the prophets*; but the babe has no “*might*,” and consequently transgresses neither the law nor the prophets, in not loving God. Being destitute of original righteousness, then, does not constitute a babe unrighteous. Adam himself was destitute of original righteousness until he *acted* righteously. Was he therefore unrighteous? If so—and destitution of original righteousness is total depravity—then was he totally depraved when coming out from under the creative fingers of the Almighty.

TEMPTATION AND SIN.

I can not refer depravity to unconscious babes. They are not accountable beings—they possess no moral powers, and, consequently, possess no faculty or power to which a moral term is referable. They are not the subjects of moral law.

God does not speak *to* them, but *of* them. They possess, I admit, the germ, which, when developed, will result in moral power; but this germ is no more moral power than the egg of the pea-fowl is the full grown bird, in all the variegated beauties of his perfect dress! I also admit that there is in babes that which *is*, or may *become*, a predisposition to sinfulness. Still I contend that this predisposition is not sinfulness—just as a predisposition to scrofula or consumption is not scrofula or consumption; for a person may be predisposed to a disease, and by the use of proper preventives, may never become a subject of it. We would do injustice even to a little serpent, were we to pronounce it to be poisonous anterior to the period at which it secretes poison! Its possessing secretory organs for the production of poison is one thing; its actually secreting poison another. So, an infant's possessing the germ of powers, and certain elements of nature connected with those powers, by which, when he shall become an accountable creature, he may become sinful or depraved, is one thing, and his becoming sinful or depraved, totally another. Depravity, with me, means SINFULNESS: sin is the transgression of law: infants are not subjects of moral law, therefore, can not sin: without sinning can not be in a state of personal sinfulness, therefore, are not depraved! I deny not the predisposition, the bias, in human nature to depravity; but I say that a bias, I care not how strong it is, in a being that is not an accountable being, is not depravity in any proper acceptation of the word depravity.

Man, it appears to me, is neither morally good nor morally bad by nature. Hence, I would no more say of an infant, *it is righteous*, than I would say *it is wicked*. Human nature is, however, a fruitful soil, in which the seeds of both moral good and evil may germinate and grow. The

seeds of good come from God; the seeds of evil from the devil. All our virtues are but the fruits of truth; all our sins the fruits of the serpent's lies. Hence, God gave our first parents truth, and it produced in them the fruits of righteousness, until Satan gave them a lie, the fruit of which was rebellion. As the earth produces neither nutritious nor poisonous fruits without the previous deposition of the requisite seeds, so the nature of man produces neither good nor evil works until the seeds of those works have been deposited within his soul. All his excitations to good and to evil are but the effects of causes foreign to his own nature—and without which never could he be a moral being—never could he be either righteous or sinful. Hence, it is most probable, after all that has been said and admitted, relative to natural biases and predispositions, that the general tendency to the commission of sin among men, consists incalculably more in the quality of those *untruths* which they receive into their hearts, than any natural bias or predisposition to evil. Was there any natural bias to sin in our first mother anterior to her being enticed by the serpent? We presume there was not. Then behold the effect of the serpent's enticement! He whispered the first falsehood into her ear—she listened, believed, and consented to reduce it to an act, sinned, died! There was hellish poison in that falsehood! It was the seminal principle of the first sin—and a Satanic falsehood has been the seminal principle of every sin that has been since committed by man. Hence, our sins are denominated “the works of the devil.” Hence, the devil is said “to work in the children of disobedience.” Those lies or evil principles with which he impregnates the hearts of men, are called “fiery darts”—they inflame the passions; they “set on fire the tongue, the whole

course of nature." Hence, before Judas could betray his master, Satan must "fill him," must "*enter him.*" Before Ananias could become a hypocrite, and lie to the Holy Spirit, Satan must "*put it into his heart.*" And before any sin can be born, "*lust,*" according to James, "*must conceive.*" There is no *seed* of sin in Adam's posterity, by nature, any more than there was a seed of sin in Adam by nature. Lust must conceive a Satanic falsehood before sin can be *born!* Lust is the mother of sin, and the devil its father.

Now, upon these principles do I account for the universal prevalence of sin in the world. The temptations of Satan, the moral, the mortal poison of his "fiery darts," (against which nothing can protect the soul of man but "the whole armor of God,") and to some extent a constitutional predisposition to sin—these, I say, are adequate to the production of all the sins of mankind. The "*WORLD,*" the "*FLESH,*" and the "*DEVIL*"—the *flesh* in its weakness, and by its predisposition to sin; the *world* as the organ of the arch Adversary; and the *Adversary* himself, the father of lies, the very source of evil, who as a roaring lion goes about seeking whom he may devour—these are the Scriptural causes of sin.

Lust, according to this view of the subject, is not the *tempter*, but the *conceiver*. Satan is the father of lies. Now, when lust conceives a lie, it becomes more or less excited or inflamed by it. Satan being the father of that which excites, is the real tempter; while the lust excited, by all the power of the lie conceived, is the immediate power within us, which *draws* to the act of sin. Hence, "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." The *power* is in the *lie*. Lust conceives this power and draws. The *power* or *lie* is from the devil, the father of lies—the real tempter. This is the true philosophy.

MANY OF THE ORTHODOX DO NOT BELIEVE THEIR
CREED-DOCTRINE OF DEPRAVITY.

If the creeds of those who style themselves evangelical are true in regard to the fall of man, then nothing short of a miracle can convert a sinner! The unregenerated are in a state of deplorable helplessness, and the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, a dead letter. Truth confirmed by miracles, and sealed and rendered of force by the blood of the everlasting covenant, is without efficacy until preceded by the "effectual call," the Almighty energy of the Spirit of God.

I must speak a word here in defense of my evangelical brethren. I have no idea that one in a thousand of them believes this article. It got into the creeds in an age of darkness, and now that the light has come, it is not convenient, on the score of consistency, to get it out. It gives occasion, too, for the display of much learned ingenuity in explaining it away, and may, also, without explaining, serve as a plume in the cap, or a diamond in the diadem of dwarfed theologues, with souls as dark as was the age in which it originated. But men of large, enlightened and liberal minds, though reckoned among the orthodox, do not, I am persuaded, believe this horrible article of faith.

In the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, I find the following significant disclosures: "It has been objected to the language, however, that the phrase, total depravity, conveys the idea of all men being as bad as they can be. As this is a sentiment which no one maintains, it were well, perhaps, if some happier term could be found to express the great truth intended by *total depravity*. "All I mean by the term," says Andrew Fuller, "is this: that the human heart

is, by nature, totally destitute of love to God or love to man," etc. See *Depravity*, p. 453.

Again, on the same page Dr. Dwight remarks: "1. That the human character is not depraved to the full extent of its powers. 2. That there are certain characteristics of human nature which, considered by themselves, are *innocent*. 3. That some of the natural human characteristics are *amiable*,—as natural affection, the simplicity and sweetness of childhood, the modesty of youth, compassion, generosity, and social integrity, to which may be added friendship, patriotism, and the sense of honor. 4. That these and all other qualities of the mind are, however, means either of virtue or sin, according to the nature of that controlling disposition, or energy, which constitutes the moral character," etc.

Dr. Clelland, in his strictures, defines total depravity as follows: "But by total depravity we do mean that human nature, in its original, native state, is totally without holiness; it is the total want or absence of original righteousness. And this absence *alone*, or want of original righteousness, is original sin itself, since it *alone* is sufficient for the commission and production of every actual sin whatever. This is a *depravation* arising from a *deprivation*, a distinction made by some divines with great aptness, and much more consonant with Scripture than the notion successfully combated by President Edwards, namely, the infusion of evil qualities into the nature of man by a positive cause, or direct agency, tainting and polluting the soul."

Scores of similar testimonies might be quoted, if necessary, from the chief men of the orthodox denominations, which prove abundantly that these men do not believe the above article in the Westminster Confession; and, consequently, that they do not believe in hereditary total depravity, in the legitimate acceptation of the

phrase. Edwards, for example, denies "the infusion of evil qualities into the nature of man," from parents to children, "tainting and polluting the soul." With this sentiment Clelland accords, and makes native depravity to consist merely "in a deprivation of holiness," without any positive evil in the original nature of man. Fuller's definition is, "that the human heart is by nature totally destitute of the love of God." Such, too, are the teachings of Dr. Thomas Chalmers; and so of modern divines in general, so far as I have had the means of learning their sentiments. The whole amounts pretty much to this: *babes at birth do not love God! ergo*, are totally depraved! Wonderful to tell! Their depravity does not consist in being "wholly inclined to *all* evil, and that *continually*," but singly and simply in a *deprivation*, out of which may grow a *depravation*!

Now, taking the definition of hereditary depravity, as given by these grave and learned doctors, to be a true definition, in regard to which, I, at present, neither affirm nor deny, it follows that there is no hereditary moral taint in man to prevent the reception of truth; and this being admitted, there is no necessity for a miraculous operation of the Spirit, nor any other operation than that which is native to Divine truth, and inseparable from it, to render the word effectual in the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of saints. Nothing, in addition to this, is needed but the manifold operations of the Divine Providence, by the all-pervading energy of Him "who worketh all in all."

The great barrier to the reception of the truth is not in any depravity which may have been transmitted to us through our progenitors, but that which we have generated in our hearts and consciences by our own actual or personal sins. The Scriptures teach that the heart is "hard-

ened through the deceitfulness of sin," and that through the same influence the "conscience is seared as with a hot iron." Our prejudices, too, often, I doubt not, are our greatest sins, because a sad hinderance to our cordial reception of the saving truth. And we see this as often manifested by those who profess to be new creatures in Christ, as in those reputed publicans and sinners. Let the Presbyterian, for instance, endeavor to convince the Methodist of the truth of the five points of Calvin. Will he likely succeed? Or the Methodist convince the Presbyterian of the five points of Arminius. Or the Baptist convince the Pedobaptist of immersion, or *vice versa*. How well do you think they would succeed? They are positively as incorrigible on these points as other sinners, in regard to things of which *they* need to be convinced! And yet truth must lie on one side or the other of each of these questions. And these people profess to have the Spirit, and to possess the ability to discern spiritual things! Why, then, does not the Spirit apply the truth, if this is his method of operation, in each of these cases, to that party which may be in error?

THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE MAY SUPPOSE HUMAN NATURE TO HAVE BEEN INJURED, BY "THE FIRST SIN OF ADAM."

"On the day thou eatest thereof," said God to Adam, "thou shalt surely die." God, however, after Adam had partaken of the prohibited fruit, granted him a respite, through the Messiah, so that he did not die a temporal death until several hundreds of years afterward. We con-

clude that the death threatened was temporal, because there was but ONE death mentioned by the Almighty, and we can prove that that ONE was a temporal death. "For since by man *came death*, by man also came the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. xv: 21. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and *death* by sin; and so *death* passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. v: 12. These passages speak of temporal death, or the death of the body, and declare this death to have fallen upon mankind in consequence of the first sin of Adam; therefore, as there was but one death threatened, and as temporal death, according to the above Scriptures, did result from the first sin, this one death must have been temporal.

Before Adam had sinned, he was permitted to partake of the fruits of all the trees of the garden, excepting, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was consequently permitted, before he had sinned, to partake of the fruit of the tree of life; for *it* was one of the trees of the garden. Now, whether we consider this tree as literal or figurative, the fruit of it had virtue, by which to perpetuate human life. This we learn from the words used by the Almighty, when he expelled our first parents from the garden. "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also, of the *tree of life*, and eat, and live forever; therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground whence he was taken." Gen. iii: 22, 23. Thus we perceive, that by the partaking of the fruit of the tree of life, Adam might have *lived forever*, but being cut off from the life-perpetuating fruit, he must ultimately die. He was left, if we may use the expression, to his merely animal resources; and, as these were all limited, they must in a limited time become exhausted. Then, death ensued. And

we may add, that diseases must have been the precursors of this death. For being destitute of the health-inspiring efficacy of the life-perpetuating fruit, he was as liable to diseases as to death; in a word, was made liable to death through disease; for, were there no diseases, there would be no natural death.

But not only was Adam separated from the tree of life, as the consequence of the first sin; all mankind were separated also. Adam, in this respect, is represented as standing at the head of the whole human family, so that his sin became theirs, and his punishment likewise! Hence the declaration of the Apostle, "By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men because *all have sinned*." Hence, also, it is said in the same chapter, that "death reigned by one man's offense," and that "by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." The meaning is, that through the sin of the first man Adam, God passed sentence of temporal death upon all men. But, still, there is no injustice in this procedure; for God has given to all men as much in the second Adam as they lost by the first. Hence it is said by the Apostle, "For as by Adam all die, even so by Christ shall all be made alive." As we lost temporal life and health by the first Adam, without any fault of our own, so we shall receive temporal health and life by the second Adam, without any righteousness of our own. As, therefore, it was temporal, and not eternal life, which we lost in Adam without any fault of our own, so it will be temporal, and not eternal life, which all those who have no obedience of their own will gain in Jesus Christ. Those alone, "*who receive an abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, will reign in life by Jesus Christ*."

As, however, this is a subject of some diffi-

ently, and much importance, we must endeavor to be more explicit. We have said that we lost only temporal life in Adam. The life which Adam lost, must have been that of which temporal death deprived him; and must consequently have been the life of the body. Now, if the life which Adam lost, was the same that his posterity lost through him, it follows irresistibly that we lost our temporal life through the sin of Adam; and as God does not threaten Adam with more than one death, it also follows, just as conclusively, that we lost *but one life* by the sin of Adam. Some of the creeds inform us that death temporal, death spiritual, and death eternal, were the penalty of the Adamic sin; but, as the Bible mentions only one death, as the penalty of the first sin, we have no right to say that there were *three*! Nor will it do to object that Adam was to die the threatened death on the day of transgression, and that, as he did not die a temporal death on that day, a temporal death was not meant. For we have already proved that Adam did subsequently die a temporal death on account of his first sin, and that as he was threatened with but one death, *this was that one*; therefore as to the respite, God did certainly grant it; nor can any valid objection be urged against his so doing. God told Jonah to say to the Ninevites, "yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But they repented and God did not destroy them. A similar method of divine procedure is conspicuous in many of the dealings of God with his creatures. That it is best for God to act in this way, in many cases, his having so acted is a satisfactory proof.

It may, however, be said, that "the life which Adam lost by temporal death, would have been eternal if he had never sinned." This we grant. Nay, more; the life of a flower would be eter-

nal, if it were never to die; and day would be eternal if there were no night.

But we said, that as we lost temporal, and not eternal life in Adam, without any fault of our own, so, without obedience of our own, we can gain nothing more than the same temporal life in Jesus Christ. This, however, must be understood with some limitations; for infants and all other persons who are not capable of obedience are exceptions to this rule. As by Adam, we all die a temporal death, even so by Christ shall we all be made partakers of that temporal life of which the sin of Adam deprives us. Now, as infants have no personal sin, it will follow that when they shall have been made alive in the resurrection, they will be in a perfectly saved and holy state. Those also who shall have committed personal sins, but who, previously to death, shall have obtained pardon, will be in a saved and holy state; but those who at death shall not have been pardoned, will, in the resurrection, be in an unsaved and unholy state; they will arise with all their sins upon their heads. Hence the necessity of obedience, if we would possess eternal life.

In accordance with this doctrine, we have many apostolic exhortations. "To them that seek for glory, honor, immortality, eternal life shall be given." "Fight the good fight of faith, that you may lay hold on eternal life." "Laying up a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, for they shall have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, etc., shall have their part in the lake

that burns with fire and brimstone. This is the second death."

These are only a few of the many Scriptures of this sort to be found in the New Testament. If, then, these Scriptures are to be credited, eternal life can not be obtained by any person capable of disobedience, who will not through obedience seek for it. "Jesus," Paul tells us, "has become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." The persons, who, by obedience, obtain the appellation, "overcomers," will inherit eternal life: but the fearful and unbelieving will inherit the burning lake, or second death!

The conclusions, then, to which, from the preceding premises, we must come, are these: that, in the resurrection, all will be made alive by Christ; "but every man in his own order," or band. One band will be composed of those who will come forth to the resurrection of life; and the other, of those who will come forth to the resurrection of damnation. All the evils which Adam brought upon the human family will be removed; so that, if men had not, by their own personal acts, committed sin, the whole family of man would be saved. But, as many will, in the morning of the resurrection, by reason of their own acts, be found in a sinful state, they will, even after having been restored to all that they had lost in Adam, die the second death! while the righteous will reach forth their hands to the life-perpetuating fruit of the tree of life, "which stands in the midst of the Paradise of God," *and eat and live forever!!*

If the reader argues that we lost either spiritual or eternal life in Adam, he is stranded!! For we have proved, that whatever life we lost in Adam will be restored by Jesus Christ. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ will all be

made alive." Now, if men die a spiritual death in Adam, without any act of their own, they will be made spiritually alive in Jesus Christ, without any act of their own; for as we die in Adam, in the same sense and to the same extent, shall all men be made alive in Christ! But, if all men shall be made spiritually alive in Christ, then all men will be saved. Thus is our opponent between Scylla and Charybdis! If we say we lost *spiritual or eternal life* in Adam, we prove *its* restoration in Christ, and our opponent is engulfed in Universalism: but if he deny that in Adam we lost either *spiritual or eternal life*, his doctrine of total depravity falls to the ground

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

In the preceding chapter we proved that temporal death, and the long direful catalogue of diseases to which human nature is incident, have resulted from the first sin of Adam. It may now be asked, "Are these the only evils which that sin has produced?" We think not. We are of the opinion, that the minds and affections of Adam's posterity have been disordered by his first sin. Upon no other principle can we account for *idiocy*, mental and physical *deformity*, etc. Some men have the most retentive memory, and scarcely any judgment: others, a very sound judgment, and little memory. Among men, there is an infinite diversity in these respects; and we know of no cause to which to attribute these evils, but the sin of Adam.

Almost all physiologists and metaphysicians,

we believe, admit that intellect depends upon organization. The human body is the organ upon which the human spirit performs; but, if this organ has been disordered, the result of the performance will be so likewise. Hence, the human spirit which dwells in an idiot, although, perhaps, as perfect as that which dwelt in Sir Isaac Newton, can exhibit but very imperfect marks of intellection. The fault is in the instrument, not in the performer! The instrument having been shattered by some calamitous stroke, refuses to send forth those melodious notes which the same performer would cause to arise from a better instrument.

If, then, intellection depends upon organization, the only question is, whether our organization has been injured by the first Adamic sin. But this point has, in effect, been already proved. It has been proved that temporal death is the effect of that sin; and, if temporal death, then all diseases: and, therefore, we may now say, if diseases, the want of a proper physical and mental organization, and, consequently, the want of perfect intellection.

It must be obvious to every discerning mind, that a shock so powerful as to bring the whole race of man to the grave, and to render us liable to every species of disease, must have been sufficiently powerful to impair our physical and mental organization. But, if this is the fact, "how," it may be asked, "has it happened that all men have not been equally affected by it?" We answer, that as the diseases to which we are incident are controlled and directed by innumerable circumstances, so are all the influences of the Adamic sin controlled and directed by circumstances. Hence, though death temporal is the effect of the first sin, yet some persons die in infancy, while others endure the storm until old age; some, also, die of one disease, and some

of another. The stream of evil influence springing out of the Adamic transgression, in flowing its downward course through time, has been divided into innumerable rills, according to circumstances; and to this fact is to be attributed all the diversity of its effects and operations. In one case, it produces a monstrous birth; in another, an idiot; in another, a hare-lip; in another, a crooked foot; in another, a hump-back. In one, a defective memory; in another, a defective judgment; in another, a redundancy of passion. Thus, every possible diversity of deformity, mental and physical, has been and may be produced. But, had not man been cut off from the health-inspiring and life-perpetuating tree, its healthful fruit would have been a preventive against the origin of this evil stream; so that, mentally, morally and physically, the organization of the whole race of man would have been complete.

We said, that in many men there is a redundancy of passion; perhaps, it may also be said, that there is a general derangement of our passions. Further than this, as it regards the human passions, we can not believe man to have been injured by the first sin of Adam.

The advocates for hereditary total depravity do the human appetites and passions much injustice. We know of no natural appetite or passion belonging to our nature, which is not, in itself, good; and which, being directed into a proper channel, is not calculated to subserve our best interests. We could not spare one of them without injury. The mere existence of our passions is not sin. Sin originates in the running of our passions into improper channels—in the not curbing or restraining them. Upon this principle do we account for the origin of all moral evil.

Adam and Eve had their appetites and pas-

sions previously to the commission of the first sin. Had they not, they would not have been susceptible of being tempted. Their susceptibility of temptation, however, seems to have been nearly, if not quite, as great as that of their posterity! Adam, it is presumed, loved Eve before he sinned. It is also certain that he possessed an appetite for eating and drinking. In short, it is probable that our first parents were the subjects of all the passions, appetites and emotions which exist in their posterity, except only those emotions which originate in a consciousness of guilt—these they could not have experienced until after they had sinned.

That the running of our passions and appetites in improper channels, and not the mere existence of them, is sinful, ought to be, to every rational mind, from the following considerations, obvious. The appetite for eating is not sinful, until it amounts to gluttony: the appetite for drinking is not sinful, until it arises to intemperance: the passion of fear is virtuous, when we fear the proper object: the passion of hatred, also, is virtuous, when properly directed: and the same may be said of all our passions and appetites. Like fire, they are good servants, but bad masters—or like the smooth waters of some gently-flowing river, are productive of good, until they overflow their banks; but in the time of inundation, bear down and destroy everything in their progress.

But in order to make, if possible, this subject more obvious, suppose a human being divested of all his present appetites, emotions and passions; of what good action, of what noble performance would he be capable? Just none at all. He could neither love nor hate, fear nor hope, joy nor sorrow; he could have no wish, no desire, no motive. In insensibility he would surpass all stoical apathy; he would no more be

capable of performing any of those actions, to which he is now almost irresistibly prompted, and which are inseparably connected with his well-being, than is inanimate matter. The inevitable conclusion, then, is, that our natural appetites and passions are not, in themselves, sinful—they are good in themselves, and are consequently productive of good in every case in which their motions are regulated by the laws of truth. We ought, therefore, to govern, not annihilate them. We shall have use for them every hour of our lives. Let us, therefore, subject them to the strict discipline of the law of the Lord. Let them be chastened, and let them be consecrated to his service, and they will not only prove highly beneficial to us, but honorable to Him who made us.

We have seen persons, whose minds had been so perverted by the monkish doctrine of hereditary total depravity, that when they beheld a child crying or fretting, they imagined that these were but the exhibitions of its depravity! Our conclusion, however, is very different. Some of the appetites and passions of children are very strong; and as their reasoning faculty has not developed itself, they are destitute of those principles, which must be exerted in order to self-government; hence, they do not possess this power. Their passions, consequently, have over them unlimited control; they are mere creatures of feeling, and act their feelings, whether good or bad, upon all occasions. Hence the necessity of moral and religious education, by which they shall be taught the principles of self-government; and hence, also, we may say, the necessity of all the means of salvation through the Gospel, without which children could not be *brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. Very great care ought to be taken by parents and guardians, not only to give a right

direction to the principles of which the nature of children is composed, but also to prevent them from contracting bad habits. There are artificial as well as natural appetites. Children ought on no occasion to be permitted to create such appetites, nor to deprave their natural ones by any kind of excessive indulgence. If these rules were observed, there would not be so many *abusers* of human nature, and we may add, nor *spoilors* of human nature! Children are, in most instances, destroyed, in a moral point of view, by the irrational manner in which they are raised, and then their nature is abused, because it did not produce fruits, the seeds of which were never sown in their minds!

REMARKS ON THE SYMPATHIES OF HUMAN NATURE.

Man is a highly sympathetic being. How frequently have we seen whole congregations in tears when a speaker addressed them on some pathetic subject! The passion of Jesus in the garden, and his sufferings on the cross, have drawn millions of tear-drops from millions of unregenerate eyes. Men, and especially women, are much disposed to sympathize with objects of distress. In the house of mourning we have heard the spontaneous sob of bitter grief arise from nearly the whole assembled multitude, when beholding the convulsed sorrow of a bereaved husband or wife, father or mother, brother or sister, son or daughter. O! how copiously did the tears flow when the shroud was removed and the friends and relatives were permitted to look for the last time upon the pale, cold face of the deceased, and to bid a long adieu to the remains of a much loved, a long-cherished friend.

At that dark moment, what vibrations did they feel running along all the cords of their sensibility! what a gush of sorrow from their bosoms! what a susceptibility of tender emotions! If they had had enmity against the deceased, it seemed all then gone, and kindness, in the place of it, had filled their hearts. How often has the hand of the unregenerate been extended, while a tear of real pity stood in his eye, to the wretched sons and daughters of poverty!

We know that the world has been inundated by depravity, and we are far from being disposed to cry peace, peace, where there is no peace. We are neither disposed, by any view which we may take of human nature, to exaggerate, nor to diminish, in relation to its goods or evils. We wish to behold it as it is, and to represent it as it presents itself to us, not in the airy regions of romance, but in real life; and, viewing it in this way, we must say, that we have been often delighted with the elevated principles which it is continually exhibiting in the unregenerate, as well as in the regenerate. We have seen these principles developed in families and neighborhoods, in the infant and in the aged man; and we believe that until they are more highly appreciated than they can be by the advocates of hereditary total depravity, human nature will suffer a proportionate loss.

The exquisitely refined susceptibilities and sympathies of human nature are obvious in all our religious impressions and emotions. Through our sympathies, the cross affects us with omnipotent power. We sympathize with a suffering Savior: his love inflames our sensibilities: his bleeding wounds pour tenderness and contrition into our souls. Frequently we catch the sympathetic glow from some penitent sinner, who may be near us in the congregation. The cross of Jesus, it may be, subdues an impenitent mother:

she advances to confess the Lord: the impenitent son or daughter beholds her tearful eye and heaving bosom, and lo! a sympathetic dart reaches the soul of one or both of them, and they, too, bow, willing, broken-hearted penitents, under the august truths of the Gospel. We have seen whole congregations thus melted into contrition; and we have no doubt but that thousands of souls in glory will bless the Lord eternally for that religion by which their sympathies were aroused, and by which they were enlisted in the cause of life and salvation.

So easily may man be operated upon through his sympathies, that in various situations, he is by them exposed to serious evils. In noisy religious meetings, we have seen scores of persons convulsed by the roar of fanatical preachers and a few of their fanatical followers. The people would perhaps seem cold and lifeless through a principal part of the meeting; the preachers would become impatient, and even murmur in consequence of the lukewarmness of their auditors; presently a man famous for stirring the sympathies of human nature, with ghastly countenance and agonistic gesture, would harangue them: "Brethren," he would say, "give us a shout in the camp!" Immediately some of the more susceptible, perhaps the more weak-minded of the sisterhood, would raise their treble voices in obedience to the preacher, in piercing, sometimes in heart-rending screams; the preachers themselves would descend among the people, and by stentor-like vociferations, stunning stamps on the floor, and loud clapping of their hands, produce an order of things which is perfectly inconceivable to those who have not witnessed such fanatical exhibitions. You might now see females falling in namelessly indecent attitudes; others, males and females, taken with what is called the laughing exercise; some with the

dancing exercise; others with the jerks; some singing, others praying; others exhorting!! Every scream was fuel to the flame of enthusiasm!! Thus have we frequently seen human nature wrought upon; and, we use it, as an illustration of the power of the human sympathies, and of our wonderful susceptibility through them. To the honor, however, of the inhabitants of the United States be it spoken, that scenes of fanaticism, such as we have just faintly described, do not often present themselves, except where the people are not well informed!*

But it is not necessary that we should dwell long upon cases of extreme excitations of human sympathy, in order to the appreciation of this subject; we are warranted in saying that any person, who will for a short time bring the operations of his mind and his heart under his strict and candid observation, will be convinced of his wonderful susceptibility of being operated upon through the medium of his sympathies. In this respect we may be assimilated to a musical instrument. The refined and innumerable sensibilities of our nature are the musical strings, upon which, through our senses, objects earthly

* Lest some fanatic should think us a very bad man for writing this paragraph, we will insert the following, from a sermon of Mr. John Wesley: "Perhaps some," says Wesley, "may be afraid, lest the refraining from these warm expressions (sweet Jesus, dear Jesus, etc.), or even gently checking them, should check the fervor of our devotion. It is very possible it may check, or even prevent some kind of fervor which has passed for devotion. Possibly it may prevent loud shouting, horrid unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or thirty times (he means glory, glory, glory, etc.), jumping two or three feet high, and throwing about the arms and legs, both of men and women, in a manner shocking not only to religion, but to common decency; but it will not check, much less prevent, true Scriptural devotion." Sermon 121, Vol. 2, pp. 444. The father of Methodism, it appears, was as much opposed to fanaticism as we are!

and heavenly, continually play, and upon which, as upon a violin, may music, earthly and heavenly, with equal facility be made. With the same facility with which we feel the refreshing zephyrs of spring, or the biting blasts of winter, do we also feel the good and evil influences, which are continually operating upon us, from the multiplied and multiform objects which surround us.

Let the reader walk into the garden, or into the fields, on a beautiful morning in spring; all nature will seem emulous to please him. The flowers will put forth their richest perfumes and most beautiful tints; the lambkins will frisk and leap along the smooth surface of the green meadow; the grove, but recently clothed with its beautiful foliage, will become vocal with the music of a thousand feathered songsters: nature will appear to have obtained a resurrection from the death of winter; and the heavens and the earth will, from ten thousand sources, pour such exhilarating streams of spirit-stirring influences into his soul, as will either make him happy or miserable—happy, if his conscience is “void of offense;” but, perhaps, miserable, if guilt hangs heavily upon his soul—in either case, it will convince him what a very susceptible creature he is!

How refined, how intense are the sympathies of mothers! Ah! could we but hear the sympathetic whisperings of the maternal heart; could we but feel for one moment as mothers feel when they look upon the fair and innocent face of their lovely babes: could we but feel that ecstasy which the infantile smile creates in the warm heart of a mother, or the pangs of that tenfold sorrow which convulses her bosom when her babe sickens and dies; could we enter into all her little maternal sentiments and feelings, her hopes and fears, her joys and sorrows; it would be more convincing, it would be more

instructive than a thousand volumes. We challenge the world here! Yes, we say here is a volume—the volume of a mother's heart—that refutes all the gloomy croakings of the sticklers for hereditary total depravity! Come ye, read it and be wise! Daughters of America, we beseech you to read this sympathetic volume, and then tell us whether that maternal heart, which winds itself by a thousand sympathetic fibers around yonder smiling cherub, is totally depraved! Ah! superstition, how hast thou darkened almost every prospect! How hast thou bewildered and rendered irrational myriads of our race! Thou lookest upon the smiling face of an unconscious babe, and beholdest naught but Satanic depravity! Thou lookest into the heart of the affectionate mother as she presses her babe to her bosom, and pronouncest each affectionate emotion to be but the workings of black corruption!!! Thou art the spider of the mind. Thou convertest the sweetest fruits and the fairest flowers into poisons! But thou art hastening to thy sepulcher; thy days are numbered!!!

The view which we have just taken of the sympathetic nature of man, presents human nature in a most interesting point of light. It has been by no means our intention to enter largely upon this subject. We desired to call the attention of the reader to the subject of human sympathies, that he might perceive how very easy it is through them to operate upon human nature, by the diversified objects, good and evil, which surround us; and in order to prepare his mind for a consideration of the

power of truth, and its fitness to operate upon and influence the rational nature of man.

Within the bosom of every man there is the principle of self-love; nor does the Christian religion contemplate the annihilating of this principle. The divesting of any man of self-love would be as great an injury as could be inflicted upon him. We are nowhere taught by any inspired teacher, the necessity of our divesting ourselves of self-love; we are commanded to "love our neighbor as ourselves;" but, if we love ourselves *not at all*, were we to love our neighbor no better than ourselves we should love him *not at all!!* Therefore, self-love is required to be kept in active exercise. But let it be observed, that self-love, as well as all our passions, must be subjected to the laws of truth. It requires to be chastened continually. If it be not wisely regulated and controlled, it will run beyond its proper sphere; in which case it will become what we call selfishness, and will therefore be sinful. An equilibrium must be kept up—a balance of love between ourself and our neighbor; in which case self-love will be found to be promotive of the general good, as well as that of each individual who exercises it.

Now, it is through the influence of self-love that men are sympathetic beings, and that they are creatures of motive. It is only in the proportion in which we love ourselves, that we can desire good for the benefit of ourselves; and as without self-love we should have no love wherewith to love others; and as, also, without love for others, we could not sympathize with them, it follows with logical precision, that self-love presents the foundation of our motives and sympathies. Why does a man pray or seek salvation, but because he loves himself? Why does he fear the condemnation and the punishment which await the guilty, but for self-love? If a

man loved not himself, would he be at all solicitous concerning his own salvation ; or, indeed, in any, respect, in relation to his own welfare, present or eternal ? We think not. Well, if he were neither solicitous for his *own* present nor eternal welfare, is it probable that he would be solicitous for either the present or eternal welfare of others ? We think not. If, then, he were not solicitous for the welfare of others, he would certainly not sympathize with them ; he would be in a state of total apathy, in relation both to his own and their welfare.

In the nature of self-love, we find a reason for the love of kindred. We say that self is very near, and that a child is very near to one's self ! It is, then, because of the influence of self-love, that a woman loves her own child better than the child of her neighbor. She, therefore, always sympathizes most with her own child. But she also sympathizes with the child of her neighbor, in the proportion with which she loves it. According to this law do love and sympathy go hand in hand, through all the ramifications of kindred, and through all the labyrinths of society, nor can they be separated. For, if self-love exist, sympathy, by an immutable law, must exist also.

Now, inasmuch as men love themselves by an immutable law of their own nature, it follows, necessarily, that they must desire such things as will, in their estimation, conduce to their happiness. It is upon the principle of self-love that no man likes to be miserable, or deprecates happiness, and that happiness is the ultimate object of all human pursuits.

For the obtaining of this, the mariner plows the ocean, the soldier breasts the battle, the merchant navigates distant seas, the scholar consumes the midnight oil, the farmer perspires and toils under the rays of a vertical sun, and

passes shivering through the blasts of winter, and for this the Hindoo immolates himself to Juggernaut, or drowns himself in the waters of the Ganges! All, all are in the pursuit of happiness! "Who will show us any good," is the universal inquiry? Thus do we become creatures of motive. All those objects which are within our reach, which appear to possess a fitness for conducing to our ultimate object, happiness, are grasped with avidity, are pursued with eagerness. And if, instead of obtaining happiness, we involve ourselves in misery by our pursuits, it is not that we do not most ardently desire happiness, but that we seek it, through ignorance or habit, in improper objects.

If this reasoning is correct, (and we think that we have a witness of its truth in every man's breast,) it will follow legitimately, that every man, in order to obtain the largest quantum of happiness of which he is capable in this world and in the world to come, must seek it by the pursuit of objects, such as are the best calculated to lead to this ultimate end. A knowledge of those objects, as well as the proper method of pursuit, are contained in God's Holy Word.

The Word of God, then, is intended to inspire us with motives of correct action, by pointing out to us the direct road to happiness—to an exceeding weight of glory! Hence it comes to us fraught with the most sublime and cogent arguments. It addresses our hopes and our fears. It pours in upon us a flood of light respecting present misery and everlasting destruction if we walk not in the truth; and it gives us present peace and eternal life for patient continuance in well doing.

No motives can equal those with which Christianity inspires the few, who do with their hearts believe it; and it comes armed with testimonies, too, to excite faith in our minds. Are

not the motives of Christianity as strong as are those of any other religion? If so, then look at the Hindoos! Read the history of that superstitious people! The motives of their religion stimulate widows to burn themselves on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands; their young men suffer themselves to be buried alive, and old and young prostrate themselves before the car of Juggernaut, and are crushed beneath its ponderous wheels! Are we willing to admit that the religion of the Hindoos inspires its votaries with motives so strong as to impel them to these horrid deeds, and in other respects to almost incredible acts of self-denial; and yet that the Christian religion is so imbecile in point of motives that it can not urge its votaries to walk in the ways of wisdom, which are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace? Certainly no Christian can admit this.

In conclusion, permit us to remark, that there is no truth more obvious, than that man is a creature of motive. Let any candid man examine each reason that moves him to each action which he may perform within one week, and we think he may clearly perceive the force and importance of motives; and we also think, that, if his actions be good, he will find that truth inspired him with his motives; but if bad, his motives will be attributable to the power of falsehood!

ON THE POWER OF TRUTH, AND ITS FITNESS TO
OPERATE ON HUMAN NATURE.

Although all truth is, to some extent, valuable, yet all truths are not equally valuable. The truth, by which we are informed of the death of a fly, is not so valuable as that by which we are informed of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Truths are valuable, only in the proportion in which they possess a fitness to be in any possible way of utility. The fitness of a truth for the production of good to any sentient being, is invariably the standard of its value.

Truths may, however, possess within themselves, a fitness to be of utility to rational sentient beings, and yet may be of no utility to them whatever, because they do not appreciate them! We will not venture to assert that we can not be benefited by any truth until we appreciate it; but we will say, that the greater part of the most valuable truths with which men have ever been acquainted, are beneficial to them, only in the proportion in which they are known and appreciated. Of what utility would be those truths which comprise the system of navigation, or astronomy, or chemistry, or botany, or indeed any art or science, were they neither known nor appreciated? They would be of no more use to man than a diamond in the bottom of the ocean; which diamond, also, let it be noticed, in order to be appreciated, must first be known to be a diamond—just so in respect to truth.

If, then, truths the most important, in order to be beneficial, must be known, we conclude, that the truths of the Christian religion, in order to be beneficial, must be known also. Indeed, the moral power, the vital energies of these truths, can not be felt in the soul of man, until

he has known them. "Ye shall *know the truth*," said Jesus, "and the *truth* shall make you free." It is through a knowledge of the truth, that "the word of God becomes *quick and powerful*," and makes the sinner who receives the "*love of truth*," free, indeed, from all his sins.

One of the ancients said, "*Great* is the truth, and *mighty* above all things, and shall prevail." And it is upon this principle, that our Savior called himself "the truth." "I am," said he, "the way, *the truth*, and the life." *The word of God*, is that divine system of truths, by which sinners are freed from sin; and this word is not only said to make "free from sin," but to regenerate, sanctify and save! James says, "of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." Peter says, "being born again, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed: the word." James speaks of "the engrafted or implanted word, which is able to save our souls." Paul recommended his brethren "to God and to the word of his grace, which was able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among the sanctified." And Jesus said, "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." The gospel is also called "the *power* of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

If any person will read the Acts of the Apostles intelligently, we think that he will be convinced, that the truths of the Gospel were carried with convicting and converting power, to the hearts of those sinners to whom the Apostles preached, by the force of testimony; and that this testimony was either prophetic or miraculous, or both.

Take, if you please, the conversions which were effected on the day of Pentecost. What an uproar did the sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, produce, throughout the whole city of Jerusalem! The multitude came run-

ning together, and lo! when they arrived at the place where the Apostles had located, they beheld cloven tongues like as of fire; and they heard illiterate fishermen speak in a multitude of languages, the wonderful works of God. They were astonished, amazed, and confounded! But Peter, the illustrious Peter, arose, and preached to them Jesus; proving by the miraculous circumstances which were visible to the *eyes* and audible to the *ears* of the multitude, as well as by David and Joel, and the miracles which Jesus had wrought in the land of Judea, and in the city of Jerusalem, and also by his own personal testimony and that of the other Apostles, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah: that he had been crucified by their own wicked hands; but that by the power of the highest, he had been raised from the dead, and sat on the throne of the Universe!! The people were pierced in their hearts!! The sword of the Spirit, the word of God, had entered their hearts, by the force of all the testimonies which had on that eventful day been presented to them. (See Acts, ch. 2.) Peter does not seem to have had any idea, that he could operate upon them morally or spiritually, through any other media than their *eyes* and their *ears*. "HE," says Peter, "hath shed forth this which you now SEE and HEAR;" from which we conclude, that by the things which they *saw* and *heard*, he expected to convert them; and that God threw all these wonderful circumstances around them, for the effecting of this very purpose.

Let us pass on, to the next account of conversions. Peter and John go up into the temple, and cure a lame man, who had been lame from his birth. The lame man commenced leaping and praising God, and all the people beheld him. But Peter declared to them that Jesus had made him whole, and immediately proceeded to de-

liver to them a powerful discourse, in which he proved that Jesus was the Christ, and exhorted them to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out. We are told that "many of them who had heard this discourse believed; and that the number of the men was about five thousand," and also that "all men glorified God *for that which was done*; for the man was about forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was showed." Nay, such power did this miraculous evidence carry with it, that it stopped the *mouths even of the priests*! "What," said they, "shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we can not *deny it*." (See Acts iii: 4.) Is not the reader convinced by these testimonies, that Peter's discourse was carried with power to the hearts of those who believed, by the evidence of the miracle which he had wrought in curing the lame man? Nothing seems to us to be more evident. Had Peter merely delivered his discourse, and wrought no miracle, nor exhibited any other evidence of its truth, it would have had but little convincing power. It would probably have been a subject merely for the ridicule of both the priests and the people.

The conversion of Saul very clearly substantiates the truth of the question which we are arguing. Being exceedingly mad against the saints, he was going from Jerusalem to Damascus, for the purpose of apprehending and punishing all the Christians whom he should find. But suddenly a light from the Heavens above the brightness of the sun shone around him; nor was this all: a penetrating voice cried out, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom thou persecutest?" It was enough!! The rebel was slain!! Yes, almighty testimony had laid the stubborn per-

secutor prostrate on his mother earth!! Was it not testimony? Was not the marvelous light which shone around him, a divine evidence that the person who spoke to him, was indeed Jesus the Nazarene? Had not the voice been accompanied by some miraculous circumstance, is it not probable, that it would have been wholly disregarded by Saul? It is evident, then, that the miraculous circumstances which surrounded Saul at the time of his conviction, were the divine evidences by which the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, and not an impostor, was carried home with power to his soul.* But, if Saul had had neither *eyes* nor *ears*, the means by which he was convicted would have been inadequate; for "the light shone [let this circumstance be closely observed,] *round about him*,"—not *within him*, as some will have it! It is also worthy of notice, that God, three days after the conviction of Saul, not by a still small voice!—a mere impulse! but by the mouth of Ananias, made known to this chosen vessel a very important action which he had to perform. "Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." Acts xxii. Reader, if your heart aches in consequence of your many sins, and you believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we say to you, go and do likewise.

The conversion of Cornelius and his household, affords another evidence fully to our purpose. All the means by which these Gentiles were converted, were, it seems, such as could be *seen* or *heard*!† In answer to the prayers of Cornelius, an angel was sent to him, who told

* Saul did not receive the Holy Spirit until three days after his conviction! In proof see Acts ix: 17.

† The angel told Cornelius that Peter "should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved."—Acts xi: 14.

him to send for Peter. Peter comes, and preaches the Gospel to him and to his household. The Holy Spirit descends upon them, as it had done upon the Jews at the beginning; they speak with tongues and magnify God, and joyfully submit to the institution of baptism in water. But why did not the Holy Spirit, without the aid of an angel, make known the truth to Cornelius? Or, if an angel must visit him, why could not the angel admit Cornelius into the Christian kingdom without the aid of Peter? Ah! the angel had not the *keys*!! The angel was not a *baptizer*!! Peter had opened the door of the kingdom to the Jews, and must now open it to the Gentiles. "Unto you, Peter," said Jesus, "will I give the *keys* of the kingdom of heaven!"

The divine circumstances by which Cornelius and his family were converted, carried with them such irresistible evidence, that not only was Peter convinced by them of the propriety of his preaching to the Gentiles, but also the six prejudiced Jews who went with him to the house of Cornelius and the murmuring brethren at Jerusalem. For when "Peter rehearsed the matter over, and expounded it by order unto them, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life."—Acts ix: 10, 11.

Let us next consider the conversion of the jailer. The great earthquake was to the jailer an evidence of the truth of the Gospel, and filled him with fear and trembling! We do not suppose that the earthquake would have converted him without the word of the Lord; it was *that* which gave the word its energy. The foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors were opened, and the bands of the prisoners loosed; the jailer supposing the prisoners to have escaped, sprang into the jail, and tremblingly fell

at the feet of Paul and Silas, crying, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" "Paul and Silas spake unto him the Word of the Lord; and *to all* that were in his house;" (no infants there,) "and he and his family were baptized on the same hour of the night. See Acts xvi. In this case, as in every other, the Word of the Lord was the *converting instrument*: but testimony the energy, the power, by which it reached the heart.

At Lystra, Paul cured a cripple, and the cripple leaped up and walked! The people *saw it*, and oh! how wonderful was the effect which this miracle had upon them! They lifted up their voices, and, in the speech of Lycaonia, exclaimed, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" Paul, they called Mercurius, and Barnabas, Jupiter, and were just about to sacrifice to them, when Paul expostulated, and spoke to them the Word of the Lord. The miracle, an evidence which operated upon them through their *eyes*, stirred up their souls to the exhibition of all this zeal; but mark this: neither the miracle, nor any operation which they had yet experienced, could give the proper direction to their zeal. It removed not their idolatrous ignorance; but when the Word of the Lord was presented to them, the evidence of this miracle became moral power, by which the Word was made to work effectually.—Acts xiv.

The conversion of Sergius Paulus, is another case in point. This man desired, we are told, to hear the Word of the Lord: but Elymas withstood Barnabas and Saul, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. This circumstance fired the apostle with a holy indignation; and by the miraculous power with which he had been invested, he struck the perverse sorcerer with immediate blindness. This was, indeed, a notable miracle! and it had the desired effect upon the mind of the deputy! For "when he

saw what was done, he believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."—Acts xiii.

The curing Eneas of the palsy, eventuated in the conversion of the people of two whole districts!! "Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise, and make thy bed: and he arose immediately. And ALL that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord."—Acts ix.

The raising of the benevolent Dorcas from a state of death, is another most interesting circumstance. There she lay, all cold, and pale, and insensible; all the widows weeping around her, and showing the coats and garments which she had made. But Peter said, "Tabitha, arise! and she opened her eyes and sat up. And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord."—Acts ix.

But not only was the evidence of miracles the omnipotent energy by which tens of thousands were converted in primitive times, the evidence of prophecy often produced the same effect. Behold the Ethiopian eunuch. He is sitting in his chariot, reading the prophecies of Isaiah. But he knows not whether the prophet speaks of himself, or of some other man. Philip explains—preaches to him Jesus. The prophecy fulfilled in Jesus, proves the truth of the glorious Gospel. Through the medium of truth, he contemplates Him who was led like a sheep, to the slaughter, and who, like a lamb dumb before his shearer, opened not his mouth. He feels his heart melt within him, confesses his faith in Jesus, and is baptized. Just as the miracles of which we have spoken, by being presented to the *eyes* of those who saw them wrought, conveyed with converting energy the truth to the hearts of thousands, so this prophetic evidence conveyed the truth of the Gospel with power to the heart of the Ethiopian. The former evidence entered the mind

through the *eyes*, the latter through the *ears*: but truth is not changed by the medium through which it passes; it retains, under all circumstances, its intrinsic efficacy, and needs but an admission to the soul, untrammelled by error, to insure it a legitimate operation.

Look at Paul: the corporally dwarfish, but the morally gigantic Paul! The little man spread himself over Asia, and even into Europe, by the mighty power with which the truth had invested him. Look at him in the Areopagus in Athens! Dionysius and Damaris are rescued from the yoke of Satan. Hear him in Thessalonica reasoning out of the Scriptures, Sabbath after Sabbath, alleging that Jesus is the Christ. See the crowds of believers, which in almost every place hang with breathless attention on his words. The craftsmen at Ephesus tremble before the majesty of truth; priests and bigots hurl against him their best weapons, persecution and defamation; but still he pushes on the conquest!! "Yes," said he, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but MIGHTY through God to the pulling down of strongholds! I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for *it is the power* of God unto all who believe it."

Apollos, too, was *mighty* in the Scriptures; and "*mightily* convinced the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." Acts xviii: 28. But the might of Apollos consisted not in the strength of his arm! He was mighty only through the truth! We sometimes say of a man of much learning and eloquence, who argues well, and presents truth with great convincing energy, "he is a *strong* man: he is a *mighty* man!" And of his arguments, we say; "they are strong, weighty, powerful, irresistible." We also say of the ignorant, "they are weak men." And of their arguments, and indeed of all arguments not accompanied with competent testimony, they are weak, chaffy,

light, flimsy, etc. All these epithets go to show, that, in the common apprehension of mankind, truth is powerful. Common sense will frequently rebel, in despite of bigotry, against the creeds; and in those cases, even those who call truth, when committed to writing, "a dead letter," use the above epithets as indicative of their common sense conclusions in relation to its power.

The truth, then, was what made Paul and Apollos, and Peter and John, and all the noble leaders of the primitive Church, "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." By its clear and irresistible evidences they fought all their battles and gained many a glorious victory. Or, if we may be permitted to change the figure, the Gospel was the wedge, the testimonies were the instrument by which the wedge was driven, and the speaker, who was mighty in the Scriptures, was he who wielded this instrument.

So weighty and so powerful did our Lord consider those evidences to be, which he had presented to the Jewish nation, that he said: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works [miracles] which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have REPENTED LONG AGO in sackcloth and ashes." "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." Matt. ch. 11. In a former part of this work, we proved, that the inhabitants of Sodom were more righteous than the Jews; and here we see that the Jews resisted evidences which contained moral energy enough to have constrained the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom to repentance—to genuine repentance, we may say, or else their repenting would not have caused the Lord to spare them!

On one occasion, after Jesus had presented

evidence to the Jews, by which to prove that he was the Messiah, and ascertained that they believed not, it is said, that "*He marveled at THEIR unbelief.*" But why did he marvel, if there is no fitness in evidence for the production of faith? Suppose that one of the disciples had said, "Lord, you seem astonished that these people do not believe: is there any virtue in those external miracles which you have wrought, and in the words which you have spoken, to originate in their hearts *saving and evangelical* faith?" Now, suppose our Lord to have answered, "No;" and to have said also, "I know very well, that before these people can believe, I must operate upon their hearts abstractly, by my Spirit;" what do you think the disciples would have thought of him? Would they not have said: "Have you operated upon them in this way, by which alone they can be made to believe?" "No!" "And do you really marvel?" "No!" He must again have said "No!" For as well might he have marveled, that the darting of straws at them failed to constrain them to believe, as evidence—if evidence has no fitness for the production of faith! In what would such conduct have differed from hypocrisy?

All the preceding instances of conversion do, to our mind, prove, in the most conclusive manner, that the converting power is contained in the divine testimonies. Are we not right in this? Even human testimony very frequently carries with it irresistible power; and John says: "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater." If we can believe from the force of human testimony, which is the less—why not from the force of divine testimony, which is the greater? How often, by human testimony, has a jury of twelve men been constrained very unwillingly, to be-

lieve facts against their fellow-men?—yes, with so unwavering a belief, too, as to find them guilty of murder! Reader, blush!! if you feel within yourself a disposition to say that men may be believed with full assurance, from the naked force of human testimony—but that the testimony of God has not native virtue enough to elicit our faith!

We can not, at present, pursue this branch of our subject further. We think that when, in connection with the preceding examples of conversion, the sympathetical and susceptible nature of man shall have been considered, it will be admitted, that men are not by nature totally depraved, and that there is a fitness in the divine Word, to produce faith. It is written, “Faith cometh by *hearing*, and hearing by the *Word*.”

LANGUAGE AN ADMIRABLE MEDIUM FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF TRUTH.

The advocates for the doctrine of hereditary total depravity seem not very well to understand this subject. “The Bible,” they say, “is mere *paper and lampblack*—how can it possess power by which to constrain people to believe savingly?” They also tell us, that “the Bible is a *dead letter** to the unregenerate.” We wish, therefore, by some remarks on the subject of language, to remove these objections; and, also, still further to illustrate the power of truth.

Language may be considered as either oral or written; in either case, it is composed of words, and words are the stipulated signs of ideas. Oral

* “*The letter killeth;*” can that, which is dead, kill?

words are articulated or jointed sounds, formed by the organs of speech; and written words are characters formed and combined in pursuance to common consent. Oral language is addressed to the ear—written language to the eye; oral language proceeds from the mouth of a speaker—written language is exhibited in stipulated characters described on paper, or on the surface of any other substance.

All language may be said to possess a *body* and a *soul*! The body of oral language is its *articulated sounds*; the body of written language, its *characters*—but the *soul* of both oral and written language is its *signification*! Words, then, without signification, are dead! Consequently, if the *words* and *sentences* of the Bible are destitute of signification, it is indeed “a dead letter.” But who will venture to say this? Is not the Bible *big* with meaning? Is it not a vehicle through which is communicated an overwhelming assemblage of the most sublime and stupendous facts? facts which have astonished the heavens and the earth!! Then, most incontrovertibly, it is not “a dead letter!”

Language has, by one eminent philologist, been denominated “*a thought throwing machine*!” By means of oral language, a speaker throws with the velocity of lightning, thoughts from his own mind into those of his hearers; and by means of written language, the writer conveys his thoughts from state to state, from continent to continent, over mountains, rivers, lakes, oceans! Yes, by this grand machine, we can throw our thoughts to the city of London—to the ends of the earth! By prayer we can convey our thoughts from our own minds to the ear of God. It is truly a wonderful and most gracious machine. It is, next to Jesus, heaven’s best gift to man. Nay, without it, we should have known

nothing of Jesus — nor of the love of God — nor of immortality. But God, after having bestowed language upon man, used it as an instrument of his own mercy, and by its means, threw from beyond all heavens, to our earth, to the ears of prophets and apostles, his thoughts concerning salvation. “Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, the heart of man hath not conceived the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us [apostles and prophets] by his Spirit;” “which things we speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, explaining spiritual things in spiritual words.” The Lord threw his thoughts into the minds of his apostles, in order that they might transmit them through the same spiritual words which he had used, into the minds of all who would hear. Hence it was said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel *to every creature.*”

But must we indeed believe that the Bible is dead because it is merely paper and lampblack? That bond, sir, which you hold for one hundred dollars, is nothing but paper and lampblack! Is it dead? Is it not rather quick and powerful? That instrument in which your father willed you a large estate, is mere paper and lampblack! But does it not transmit to your very soul a strange influence? That letter which those aged parents have just received from a distant country, is paper and ink! but behold! why do those tears trickle down their cheeks? Why that wringing of the hands? Why those convulsive sobs? The letter tells them (and each word is like a swift-winged arrow), the letter tells them that their beloved son is dead! The power of language is in the signification; the meaning of language is its life; the signification is the dart

that pierces, the fire that warms, or the oil that heals! Language without signification is like a human body without a spirit—dead!

Language, however, can not affect human beings legitimately, unless they understand it. Hence, the necessity of every man's having a Bible in his own language. Hence, also, we blame the Catholic priests for preaching to the people in a language which they do not understand. But, if Bible truth, in the English language, is dead to those persons who speak this language, why is not the practice of the Roman priests as good as ours? Why is not Latin as edifying to unregenerate men, who understand not a word of it, as English? You say, "because, as the people understand not the Latin words, they convey no signification to their minds." But will *dead letter*, in English, convey any profitable signification to unregenerate ears? If you say, "No:" we reply that Latin is just as good as English, to be used by preachers in their addresses to the unregenerate. If you answer in the affirmative, you acknowledge the power of truth to benefit the unregenerate; even though transmitted through the printed words and sentences of the Scriptures. And we beseech you not to forget this one thing: if you will not admit a perfectly influential transmission of truth through the machinery of the Bible, you will attribute more power to human, than to divine language.

Paul was of the opinion, that intelligible language might have great influence in the mind of an unbeliever. See 1 Cor. 14th chap. Prophecy, in this chapter, signifies the speaking in a known tongue. Now, says Paul, "If ye all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is *convinced* of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and, so falling down on

his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." But mark the difference! These same truths, spoken to this same individual in an unknown tongue, would cause him to say "Ye are mad!" Can the reader account for this difference in any other way, than by admitting that the converting power is in the truth; and that the truth can not be communicated, except through an intelligible medium?

This fact is, we think, now very apparent. Indeed, the Apostle says, "If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me."

We have sometimes, for the sake of illustration, assimilated the Word of God to a telescope. This instrument possesses the faculty of bringing far distant objects to be in appearance near to the observer. Dr. Herschell's large telescope, it is said, places the moon apparently at the distance of only forty miles from the observer! By this wonderful instrument, the material heavens have been penetrated, and myriads of brilliant worlds discovered. But the telescopic Word is infinitely more wonderful! Through it, we view the creation of the heavens and the earth at the beginning, and their dissolution at the end of time. All the ancient worthies come within the sphere of our vision, and pass in interesting review before us: we can almost behold the face of the patriarchs and prophets, so vivid are the descriptions of Holy Writ. We see also the rise and fall of nations; the judgments of God in all their terrible majesty; fire from above destroying the cities of the plain, and the earth opening her mouth to devour Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. We behold Jesus, first in a manger; then upon a cross; now upon the throne of the universe; finally, descending, arrayed in all the grandeur of eter-

nity, in all the solemnity of judgment. Not the material, but the immaterial, the spiritual heavens have been laid open for our inspection! In one sentence, the blessed Word of God is a divine medium, through which we may contemplate all those objects about which it is conversant, whether past or future, great or small, good or bad, in heaven or in hell, in time or in eternity; and we may bring them near; yes, and feel all their weight and influence.

This telescopic illustration will enable us to show in what manner a diversity of operations may be effected in the human mind, through the medium of the Word. When we take a telescope, in order to make an observation, should we behold a fiery comet speeding its way with direct precipitancy toward our earth, what horror would thrill along our nerves!! But suppose that, instead of a comet, fair Venus should become the object of our contemplations, how different our emotions!! We would not imagine, that in these cases, the power of operation was exclusively in the telescope; we should attribute our emotions to those objects contemplated through it. In the same way, then, are we operated upon by a diversity of objects, through the Word. A contemplation of the "evil one," and of the "dark abyss," gives us horror; the love of Jesus spreads peace and mild serenity over the mind. We have sometimes assimilated the Word to a sun-glass; because, as the glass brings the rays of the sun to a focus, to a burning point, so the Word of the Lord concentrates the moral light of the heavens and the earth upon the heart of man!

Why are the leaders of the sects so much alarmed, in consequence of the circulation of the writings of certain individuals who advocate religious reformation, if they are not believers in the mighty power of words? Why, but for this

belief, have the writings of A. Campbell, by several ecclesiastic councils, been proscribed? And, we may also ask, what, but the power of words, has built up and perpetuated all the sects in Christendom? Does the Spirit, without human language, make Christians? Upon what principle, then, does Presbyterian preaching make Presbyterians? Methodist preaching, Methodists? and Baptist preaching, Baptists? If no other than the Holy Spirit were engaged in this work, would he not make them all to be of one denomination? Ah! the power of language is conspicuous here! Have you never noticed that the more eloquent and the more popular the preacher, the more numerous his converts? This ought to fire the minds of preachers with unconquerable desire for the acquisition of knowledge and eloquence, that by a proper and most forcible presentation of truth, they might save many souls from death, and cover a multitude of sins.

It may be, that the reader by this time is disposed to ask, "why the Word of the Lord, (if it possesses so much moral or spiritual energy, as we have attributed to it,) does not more largely influence those to whom it is administered?" The reader may have an answer in these words: *falsehood neutralizes the truth!!!* Let the reader suppose himself to receive a letter from an acquaintance in a distant state, informing him that a rich uncle had died, leaving him the sum of ten thousand dollars. Let him also imagine himself to be poor, and in great need of money; and that the letter is accompanied with circumstances, such as leave no doubt of its truth. Would not the reader with alacrity hasten to the residence of his uncle? Yes; faith in the contents of the letter, and hope of obtaining the money, would be securities against all delay. Let the reader, however,

imagine that he takes up the letter again, and notices a postscript which he had not before read. It reads as follows: "I have willed to my nephew the aforesaid sum of ten thousand dollars, on condition that he place himself in a basket, and taking hold with his hands, each side of it, that he lift himself up, and in this way actually convey himself to my residence." Let the reader imagine this postscript to be believed, would not the letter be neutralized! Suppose the whole letter to be true, still it would be neutralized! "Why," says the reader, "I am unable to fulfill the condition, and consequently the letter is of no use to me." Thus do the Calvinists and Fullerites neutralize the Gospel! They present to sinners the blessing of pardon and the glories of heaven! and lo! after all, tell them they can do nothing!! The sinner believes them, and remains where he was—in sin.

If the reader please, he may vary this illustration. He may suppose the postscript to propose, as a condition, that "he shall remain perfectly stationary,"* until a messenger from his uncle arrives, places him in the basket, and conveys him by physical strength to the house of his uncle. Would this expedite—would not this infallibly prevent his journey? So is the truth neutralized! The sinner is represented as totally depraved, and incapable of every effort by which his situation might be bettered, until the Holy Spirit comes, takes the soul by storm, and leads it captive by *sovereign* (we would say *partial*) grace!

Again: let the reader suppose a traveler to be in a strange country, and desiring to make the best of his way to the chief city. He sees a mul-

* It would make the matter no better, to say that this person should strive and agonize, until the messenger should come!! What! a mass of total corruption strive!—seek!!—absurd!!

tiplicity of roads, extending in all directions, through every part of the country. Travelers, too, in crowds, are hastening along these roads. Now, let these travelers represent the great diversity of religionists, and these roads the great diversity of religions; our traveler will of course represent an inquirer for the true religion,—the road that leads to heaven. Well, he makes the inquiry; his ears are immediately stunned with discordant sounds! “The light within,” says one; “General atonement and special application,” vociferates a second; “Sovereign grace and particular election,” cries a third; “You can not move an inch until God regenerates you by his Spirit,” cry a half-dozen at once!! Now, what is the traveler to do? He is neutralized! Yes, ye speculatists, ye have neutralized him! Ye have made void the Word of God by your traditions! and the Lord will require it at your hands!

Imagine a mill-wheel. The water pours on it, but it refuses to turn. A philosopher standing by, begins to speculate on the strange phenomenon: and to what wonderful conclusion do you suppose he arrives? Just hear it! “The water,” he concludes, “is not the right kind of water, or certainly the wheel would turn!” A matter-of-fact man, however, who has no great taste for this very refined speculation of our philosopher, looks under the wheel and finds a prop there by which it had been neutralized; he removes the prop, and lo! the wheel turns! So it is with the minds of thousands of sinners throughout Christendom: truth pours upon their minds, but yet they are not moved to obedience. The truth is blamed by many, as our philosopher blamed the water: but the *prop* is to blame! the *traditions* of the elders are to blame! these neutralize the truth.

But truth, like light, is a penetrating thing.

If there is any medium through which it can pass, it will enter the soul; nor will it easily depart. What is it but the power of truth in the soul that makes the sinner so uneasy in his conscience? He uses various expedients by which to destroy its operations, but still his heart aches and trembles. The intoxicating draught sometimes affords a momentary palliative; but when sobriety returns, its throbbings and thrillings are redoubled. The infidel, it is true, sometimes boasts of his unbelief, but not unfrequently he has more faith than he desires! Go to his death-bed, and witness the power of truth. There his tongue tells the convulsions of his bosom. There he calls on the name of that Savior whom once he neglected, and shudders at the prospect of that hell which once he ridiculed. How often has truth held back the arm of the assassin, and restrained the murderer from the perpetration of his deed of blood. What, but truth, has made the difference which is known to exist between civilized and heathen nations? Yes, great has been the influence of truth: but much greater would it have been had not it been so frequently and so powerfully opposed by error.

THE POWER OF TRUTH CONTINUED.

In Exodus, there is a circumstance recorded, which interestingly and instructively illustrates the power of testimony. God's people, Israel, were in bondage in Egypt, and in order to the delivering of them from bondage, he gave faith to the whole nation! From this circumstance, then, we expect to prove that there is fitness in testimony to operate upon human nature; and,

consequently, that there is a fitness in human nature to be operated upon by testimony.

The attention of Moses was first arrested by a burning bush! A voice from the bush declared the speaker to be the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and informed Moses that HE had been chosen to be the deliverer of the afflicted Israelites. Exodus iii. But "Moses answered and said, Behold, they will not BELIEVE, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, *the Lord hath not sent thee.*" Exodus iv. "How shall the people be constrained to believe?" seems to have been the difficult question which agitated the mind of Moses. The Lord will give them faith!! "What is that," said the Lord, "in thine hand?" "A rod." "Cast it on the ground." Moses did so, and it became a serpent. "Put forth thine hand," said the Lord, "and take it by the tail." Moses obeyed, and it again became a rod. This miracle was to be wrought by Moses in the presence of the children of Israel, in order to constrain them to believe that God had sent him to be their deliverer; and also to believe all the words which he should declare to them from the Lord; and in case this miracle should fail to have the desired effect, he was to present them with *two others*. See Exodus iv. To the same end, and for the enlightening of the Gentiles, were the ten plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, and the waters of the sea divided. The nations were much addicted to idolatry; the Lord, therefore, chose not only to give, on this occasion, such testimonies as would carry the words of Moses with convincing power to the hearts of the Israelites, but such also as would "make his *power known*, and cause *his name* to be declared throughout *all the earth.*" By the miracles wrought in Egypt, all the Gentile nations who should hear of them, would know that the God of Israel was

greater than all the gods of the Gentiles,—that he was the Lord of Hosts !

Thus were the children of Israel constrained to put themselves under the supervision of Moses, and to follow him out of the land of their bondage. The Lord gave them faith, by presenting adequate testimony to their *eyes* and *ears*—faith enough to cause them to leave the land of their nativity; to face the frightful Arabian desert; to pass along upon the bottom of the mighty deep, though its waters, as lofty walls, stood high above their heads on either side; and, we may add, that God gave them this faith by testimony, notwithstanding “they were a stiff-necked and a rebellious people.”

Does not the reader perceive, in the circumstances connected with the emancipation of the children of Israel from bondage, the power of testimony? Testimony wrought faith; faith stimulated to obedience; and faith and obedience bore them, as on eagles’ wings, from the land of their oppressors! Thus, dear reader, will faith and obedience lift our souls above the earth, and give them an introduction to the royalties of Heaven.

If the reader will read the five books of Moses, he will discover that not only was he the deliverer of Israel, but gave to them from God a whole system of religion. A perfect knowledge of the religion of the Jews may be obtained from the writings of Moses; and also a knowledge of the means by which this religion was to be perpetuated among these people throughout all succeeding generations. These means chiefly consisted in the observance of annual festivals, various other ceremonial rites, and, above all things, the reading of the writings of Moses, or the hearing of them read. In the valedictory address of this illustrious leader, he says to the whole nation, that “This commandment which

I command thee this day is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to Heaven and bring it down to us, that we may hear it and do it. Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it; but the Word is very near unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it."—Deut. xxx.

The Apostle Paul quotes very nearly these words of Moses, when speaking of the Christian religion. *See Rom. chap. 10.* But to the point. We have seen that the Jews' religion was established by evidences, such as could be *seen* and *heard*; and that it was to be perpetuated by tangible and substantial means. Is not this also true of the Christian religion? Was the Jews' religion established by miracles? So was the Christian! Were the principles of the Jews' religion committed to writing by a man sent of God? The Christian religion was written by *men* sent of God! Was the Jews' religion written as a means by which to perpetuate in that nation a knowledge of it? John says, concerning the things which he had written, "These things are written, that ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing* ye might have LIFE through his name." John, chap. 20. Had the Jews their Sabbaths and their annual festivals? Christians have their first day of the week, and baptism, and the Supper of the Lord!

Between the Jewish and the Christian religion there runs throughout a beautiful analogy; but from this analogy, as well as all the features of the two religions, we think it is as clear as demonstration itself, that testimony or evidence presented to the *eyes* or to the *ears*, was the divine power or energy by which faith was

wrought in the minds of the people. The whole machinery of both Testaments works only on this principle. The miracles, the prophecies, the ordinances, all tend to this point. Hence, the strength of the arguments which the Christian can present against infidelity. A man, who, as was Apollos, is mighty in the Scriptures, may panoply himself in the spiritual omnipotence of heaven, for the conviction of unbelievers. But hark! here shows itself the serpent-head of another neutralizing falsehood!! "The faith, that is produced by these testimonies," say the advocates for total depravity, "is a *mere historical faith*!!" Would you denominate the testimonies of God, recorded in the Bible, "*a mere history*?!!" Is it not *a divine history*? If a divine history is a divine cause, must it not produce a *divine effect*? "These things," says John, "were written that ye might *believe*,"—"and *have life*!" Are not the writings of John a divine history, written for the purpose of giving a divine faith, that such believers might receive a divine life? O! ye neutralizers of God's truth, answer us these questions! And answer us also this: is not the disbelief of the divine history of Jesus Christ, given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, infidelity? You say "yes." Is not infidelity the opposite of the true faith? "Yes." Then the true faith must be the belief of divine history! Is not the true faith a belief of the truth? Again: there is much said in the Holy Scriptures concerning *hope* and *love* as well as *faith*. But if faith is not to be understood in its usual acceptation, why should we understand *hope* and *love* in their usual acceptations? In this way, we might render mystical, and dark as midnight, almost every word in the Bible! The usual acceptation of faith, is, *the belief of testimony*; that of hope, *the desire and expectation*

of future good ; and that of love, affection mingled with admiration.

We believe that God used human language as a medium for the communication of those truths which he has required us to believe ; and that, in the use of language, he has not attached meanings to our words, such as custom has not sanctioned. To have used the words of men in any other than the sense which the customs of men had sanctioned, would have been to perplex, not to enlighten. Paul, under the influence of the divine Spirit, was careful to use words easy to be understood, and tells us, that he “used great plainness of speech.” But if, when he said *faith, hope, love*, or anything else, he did not use the words in their usual acceptation, in what did his plainness of speech consist ? He sometimes speaks of *doubting* ! but if by this word he did not mean what it usually signifies, who can tell what he did mean ? Is not *doubting* the opposite of *believing* ? The answer must be affirmative ! Therefore, there is no more difficulty in understanding the meaning of the word *faith*, than the meaning of the word *doubt* !

The advocates for the doctrine of hereditary total depravity frequently inveigh with great bitterness against Deism ! We would, therefore, ask them in what way they would proceed to convince a Deist of his errors ? Would you “*reason with him out of the Scriptures* ?” This was Paul’s practice ; but we cannot perceive why you should reason with an unbeliever at all ! Suppose you should convince him ! His *faith*, according to your own doctrine, would be a *mere historical*, and consequently not a *saving faith* ! His convictions, according to your hypothesis, could be of no possible service to him. Why, then, do you blame an unbeliever for his unbelief ? If the power of *saving faith* is not in testimony, and

the unbeliever cannot believe, until God operates upon him abstractly by his Spirit, ought you not to pity, rather than blame him?

The evils produced by those who inveigh against that divine faith, which is the production of the divine testimonies, frequently bring to our mind the following illustration. A poor woman, who had a large family of children, was reduced to very distressed circumstances. Her children were starving around her, although she had money to supply plentifully all their wants! Her money was pronounced by the *broker* and the *merchant* to be counterfeit; and as she confided in their judgment, she was intimidated for some time, from attempting to use it. At length, however, a judicious friend, after examining it, advised her to present it to the bank whence it had been issued, telling her that he believed it to be a genuine note. She did so—and received for it, its amount in silver and gold. Now let this bank-note represent the historical faith of sinners. Those who possess it are told by the *managers of spiritual concerns*, that it is a mere historical faith, and of no value. This falsehood neutralizes the power of truth in their minds, and renders their faith as useless to them, as was for a time the note of the woman. Let them, however, be encouraged to present this faith, by Gospel obedience, to the Lord Jesus Christ, who issued it, and the bank of Heaven will give them pardon, and the Holy Spirit, and all things necessary to life and godliness. Let them remember the parable of the talents. The servant who had but one talent buried his; acted as those who possess historical faith are doing! Let every man who has any faith at all, put it to use by obedience; and as he shall answer for it at the day of judgment, let no man attempt to prevent him from putting into practice his

faith ; for those who will not by obedience use what faith they have, will, in a future day, be called "*wicked and lazy servants.*"

THE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT.

By a physical operation of the Spirit of God the earth and the heavens sprang into existence the heavens were studded with myriads of brilliant orbs, and the earth filled with myriads of inhabitants. God spake, and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast ; the earth, the waters, the air, the light—all obeyed him ; therefore, all nature, with all its inconceivably numerous forms, is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. But the Spirit, even in operating physically, and producing this fruit, operated through the Word. All the productions of nature are the fruits of the Spirit, by its physical operations on matter ; and all the revelations of God are fruits of the Spirit, by its physical operations on the minds of prophets and apostles ; to which we will now add that love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance, are fruits of the Holy Spirit, by its moral operations, through the Word, upon the hearts of believers. Thus do we attribute to the Spirit universal operation ! Its physical operation is commensurate with creation ; and its moral operation with revealed truth !

David says, " Whither shall I go *from thy Spirit?* or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there ; If I take the wings of the morning,

and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Ps. cxxxix. In the 13th verse of this Psalm, David declares that the Lord possessed his reins, and covered him before he was born; and afterward, in the same Psalm, represents his own substance as having been curiously wrought by the plastic fingers of the great Creator. These passages, and many others, prove to us the omnipresence of the physical energy of the divine Spirit: that it is in heaven, in hell, and in the unconscious fœtus; that, in short, it

"Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

But, as man is a moral being, he can not perform moral actions without motives; therefore, the Holy Spirit presents motives to the mind, in his Word, in order to the production of moral action. By his physical energy he creates the man, and holds him every moment in existence; but this is no more a moral operation, than that by which a beast is created and held in being; (for the Spirit creates and supports the brutal tribes, as well as men; and not a sparrow can fall to the ground without our heavenly Father;) the Spirit, therefore, presents to our minds, motives, by his Word; and thus are we supported physically and morally by the Spirit of God. Our natural food is produced by the operations of the Spirit on matter; our spiritual food, by its operations on the minds of the apostles and prophets.

DIVINE TRUTH, TO BE EFFICACIOUS, MUST BE
TRUTH IN JESUS.

Divine truth is "the bright effluence of the essence of the uncreated mind." It stands upon the rock of ages, and lifts its head above the stars. "It will survive all its foes, and stand erect when every idol falls." It "is living and powerful;" and it will "live and abide forever." It has been often cast down, but never destroyed. "For ages past it has been gathering strength, and preparing for a mightier conflict yet, than time records." Whoever bows to its supernal mandate, shall, in due time, be crowned with immortality; while those who resist, shall be clothed with shame and everlasting contempt.

But divine truth, to be efficacious in the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification of saints, must be "*truth as it is in Jesus.*" Eph. iv: 21. Here it has an aspect and a character, a vitality and a power, which it never could have possessed, had it been communicated through any other medium.

Begin, if you please, with the Great First Cause, through whose agency has arisen the fair and magnificent fabric of the visible universe. Revelation teaches us that this First Cause is a Spirit—a Spirit everywhere present—of whom creation is everywhere full—in whom all live, and move, and have their being—by whom all things subsist. Without the Son, what a splendid abstraction! a circle whose center is everywhere, and its circumference nowhere! Like eternity, like boundless space—there would be no point upon which the mind could rest. A splendid vagueness, a perplexing incomprehensibility, a tiresome round of ever-during sameness would chill, and discourage, and con-

found the soul. Hence, "the word became flesh." "God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself." "We behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Truth, concerning this first grand element of all true religion, has become "truth in Jesus." God has, as it were, localized himself. We know where to find him in all his saving influences. He is in Jesus, who is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, in Christ, the bleeding Lamb—the dead—the buried—the risen—the glorified one. Here we can approach Him who is a Spirit, under the overpowering fervor of that love with which "God loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Take, for another illustration, the fact that God created the heavens and the earth. This, viewed with reference to the Father only, is a splendid fact, leading to highly interesting developments; but, which, viewed out of Jesus, falls infinitely short of possessing the interest, with which it is clothed, when contemplated in Jesus Christ. Out of Jesus, creation is referable, to an abstract, omnipotent, omnipresent, invisible spirit, who, so far as we can learn, out of Jesus, possesses but little in common with ourselves; but, in Jesus the whole gorgeous structure of materialism, spreading interminably above us, and around us, is nothing less than an august temple reared for consecration to the Mediator's glory. "All things were created by him, and for him," and we, if Christians, "are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." My elder brother is creator, preserver, redeemer, and heir. Not a star twinkles, nor does a dew-drop glitter, nor an insect flutter in the breeze, but for the glory of him who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last—our brother Redeemer—the Lord of the universe!

The justice of God:—How could we contemplate this, but in Jesus, the Mediator. Sinners against God—justly obnoxious to his sore displeasure—the red hot bolt about to be driven into the soul—the vials of wrath to be poured upon us in burning profusion. O! is there a city of refuge—an ark of safety? Yes; Jesus says, “come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Here we can stand, on the firm foundation of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” and perceive beauty, and not terror, in the divine attribute of justice; and “how God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

The love of God:—Truth, in regard to this attribute, cannot be seen in its full-orbed glory, but as truth in Jesus. To speak a world from nothing was inexpressibly great, but, to redeem this world, when fallen, transcendently greater. “Herein is love, that God gave his only begotten son, to be a propitiation for our sins.” Here love and justice are harmonized; and we are brought into fellowship with love; and made the partakers of the divine nature. Here, we perceive, with practical and experimental effect, that “God is Love,” and “love him because he first loved us.” Thus religion becomes a thing, not merely of the head, but of the heart. Faith, originated or excited in the mind, by the Word of God, “works by love” and “purifies the heart,” because it is the creature, or creation of “the truth as it is in Jesus.” Thus the Spirit, through the truth, “glorifies Jesus,” presenting *him* as the center and source of Christianity, and of all saving influences.

Truth in reference to man:—Man is a fallen creature, fearfully and wonderfully made, with faculties weakened, and with passions disarranged by sin. But to what depth has he fallen? We can only learn the depth to which we have sunk, by

the length of the chain let down to updraw us. We can only appreciate the mightiness of our ruin, by the potency of the machinery of restoration; or the value of our persons, by the price of our redemption; or the turpitude of sin, in the fact, that no principle in the universe could be found, having efficacy to remove one foul blot of guilt from the soul, but the expiatory blood of the great Redeemer. Here, too, we learn, the insidious power of our spiritual foes, by the strength of the Son of the Highest, who was sent to fight our battles. Here "fear that hath torment" is removed far away, because, through "the truth as it is in Jesus," we have redemption in his blood, and through the golden vista of the glorious future, contemplate, in the person of Him who will sit upon the great white throne of the eternal judgment, one who took our nature, "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on such as are out of the way." But further, in this direction, we cannot at present proceed. Suffice it to say, that every truth belonging to our holy religion, is "truth in Jesus," who is "the way, the truth, and the life;" and is vitalized, and energized, in our minds and hearts, through a believing apprehension of what he is, and of what he has done for us, in the work of redemption. "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."

Here the reader may perceive why it is, that deism will not convert the soul. Its truth, in so far as it *is* truth, *is truth out of Jesus!* It can have, therefore, in respect to the renewal of the mind, and the purification of the heart, no converting influence. Its light, for all purposes of conversion, is as powerless as moonbeams in the germination and growth of the vegetable kingdom. It is a negation, as darkness is the negation of light; for, although it may inculcate many truths, both in regard to God and man,

yet, its denial of the Son, neutralizes and negatives those truths—it being the decree of the Father “that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father,” and, it being, also, in the necessity of the case, that the truth, in order to convert, must be “truth as it is in Jesus,” sealed by “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” Where is the bad man that has been made a good one by natural religionism, or deism? I presume not one! What have deists done for the amelioration of the condition of man? Where are their schools, their colleges, their asylums, their missionaries? Echo, from the outer darkness of the hollow profound, of an infinity of negations; answers, where? It is a shell without the kernel! it is a body, without the soul! a system without a sun!

The following illustration may somewhat assist the reader, in this stage of our investigation. An unbeliever, walking with an eminent lady, over her grounds, was telling her that the incarnation of Christ, appeared to him, to be altogether unreasonable. Just at that moment, they observed, at their feet, a hillock which had been erected by the ants, with the little nation busily engaged around it. Said the lady to the unbeliever, “suppose you should wish to get into the sympathies of those ants, what course would you pursue, to do so?” “Why,” said he, “I would become an ant!” “Thus,” said the lady, “has God manifested himself in the flesh, to get into our hearts.” This, to my mind, is beautiful; and goes very far toward explaining, why it is, that, while truth out of Jesus is inefficacious, truth in Jesus, is, or may be, “the power of God unto salvation.”

JESUS THE SOURCE AND EMBODIMENT OF SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE.

That Jesus is the central sun of Christianity, none we presume but the infidel will deny. The Scriptures represent him as having risen with healing in his beams. Enthroned in light, his influence is felt in heaven, earth, and hell; like his glorious prototype, nothing can be hidden from the light and heat of his influence. He is Lord of all—King of angels and of men—"by whom all things subsist"—"upholding all things by the word of his power!"—"the first and the last"—"*the ALL in ALL,*" of our holy religion. Ought not these considerations to exert a powerful influence upon the moral nature of man?

1. *He is our brother.*—Seeing us ruined by sin, he clothed himself with our humanity. The WORD was made flesh. Our humanity in his person is now glorified. Kindredship is a source of influence. Existing between man and his peerless Redeemer, it must be a source of divine influence. It opens an avenue to all the depths of our sympathies. In him heaven and earth are united. The divinity and the humanity embrace each other.

2. *Our brother is Prophet, Priest, and King.*—He unites in himself three of the highest offices in the universe. Office, authority, dignity, give influence. Suppose a brother to be President of this Union, or an earthly potentate, would it not, other things being equal, render him highly influential with his brethren? Even without kindredship, high offices give to those who wear them, in many instances, great influence. How much more, when our own brother—flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone—is the dignitary!

3. *Righteousness gives influence.*—Jesus is and ever has been a righteous person; not merely

negatively so, but positively righteous. He is and ever has been an impersonation of virtue. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." With emphasis it is said, "he went about doing good." "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He won, by well-doing, promotion to the throne of universal empire. "His scepter is a scepter of righteousness." "Thou," said the Father, "hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." How sublime his exaltation. He is my brother—my kinsman—Redeemer. If the righteous example of a father, a mother, a wife, a husband, or any other relative, is fitted to shed forth into the mind a purifying influence, how much more the example of him who is not only my brother, but also, at the same time, the Prince of the kings of the earth, and whose example is perfect.

4. *Knowledge gives influence.*—We do not mean that knowledge received is influential in the mind of him who receives it. This is a great truth, but not that truth to which we at present refer. We mean that profound knowledge, especially when accompanied with goodness, elevates its possessor in the estimation of mankind. In our approaches to such men we feel reverence, and sometimes awe; and unless the finer elements of our nature have been engulfed in ignorance and sensuality, we listen to their utterances with breathless attention. But in Jesus "dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "He is the wisdom of God, and the power of God." "In him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily." "His understanding is infinite." In his teaching he makes no mistakes. He is too wise to err, too good to mislead. In his mind there is an ocean fullness of truth. How venerable! how august is he! All the

science of earth dims in the radiance, the effulgence of his countenance. Yes, and he is "my wisdom," as well as my brother—"and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Why, but to pour divine and saving influences into our minds, have these revelations been made of our gracious Redeemer?

5. *Riches give influence.*—How often have they elevated dolts to places of honor, and converted ignorance and vulgarity, if not knavery, into respectability. But all the riches of earth are poverty, compared with the wealth of the Redeemer. What think you of "the unsearchable riches of Christ?" "All things were made by him and for him." "He is heir of all things." The whole estate of the Father of all is his forever—riches, intellectual, moral, physical—the Father has given all into the hands of his Son. My brother Jesus is richer than all the kings of the earth; and being not only rich, but infinitely good, has offered all the world a co-heirship with himself, on the terms of the Gospel, of the infinite estate of the Lord God Almighty. Among those to whom this offer has been made, ought not the influence of the Redeemer to be unbounded?

6. *The bestowment of favors gives influence—and should give it proportionally to the value of the favors bestowed.*—Your wife or your babe falls into the dark, deep waters, and a passer-by, at the great hazard of his life, rescues, as the case may be, the one or the other; can you in a lifetime repay your benefactor? No; if it were but a dog, you would feel toward him as toward no other of canine species. But what would be deliverance from all the innumerable ills of life, compared with the deliverance which has been vouchsafed to us through our Lord Jesus Christ? We were drowning in destruction and perdition, and Jesus interposed his life to save us. He not

only risked his life, but lost it to achieve our redemption. In the sweat of the garden, and in the pangs of crucifixion, in the shuddering horror which he felt, with the weight of our sins upon him, a target for all the hosts of darkness, when he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" we dimly perceive the Prince of our redemption. "We love him because he first loved us." O Lamb of God, thy love, radiating from the cross, has warmed and renovated my cold, dead heart! Yes, there is saving influence in Jesus. My brother has died for me, to save me from eternal burnings! Faith is the channel through which this influence flows into my soul. "He was delivered for my offenses, and rose for my justification."

Oh for such love let rocks and hills
 Their lasting silence break;
 And all harmonious human tongues
 Their Saviour's praises speak.

ADAPTATIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

Christianity is adapted to man as he is. I do not say that man may not put himself beyond its reach by hardening his heart, and searing his conscience in resistance of its truths, for I have no doubt that this is a daily occurrence; but I do say, that unless a man has wholly spoiled his moral nature by the practice of sin, the Gospel is as precisely suited to him as light is suited to the eye, or sound to the ear, or wholesome food for the purposes of nutrition. It was never designed to tantalize a sinner. God holds not the bread of life to our mouths, and yet does not enable us to reach it. In the

invitations of the Gospel, as well as in all his works and his words, he is righteousness and truth.

In one of the epistles to the Corinthians the apostle speaks of "the ministry," and of "the word of reconciliation." This word is the Gospel. This Gospel was committed to Paul that he might preach it to sinners. When preached to sinners, it was the power of God unto salvation to every one who believed it. It reconciled them to God, and hence was styled "the word of reconciliation." Now, in order that we may clearly perceive whether or not the Gospel is adapted to man, to reconcile him to God, let us occupy our present sitting in an examination of the several classes of truths which comprise the Gospel, and also scan the intellectual and moral nature of man, so far as to ascertain whether these several classes of truths are exactly suited to his intellectual and moral nature.

In the Gospel I discover four classes of truths—testimonies, promises, threatenings, commands. The testimonies are addressed to man's faculty, or capability of believing. The promises are addressed to our faculty of hoping and loving. The threatenings are addressed to our faculty of fearing. And the commands to our conscientiousness; and test the moral state of the inner man, with respect to loyalty or obedience.

1. The testimonies are addressed to man's faculty of believing. There is, naturally, a faith faculty in man. How easily does the infant believe the mother or the nurse? It is as natural for it to believe as to see or hear. It believes the very eyes of the mother, as by their expression they send down sweet intelligence into its little susceptible heart. It never doubts until it detects an untruth. This, and not its incapacity to believe, makes it a skeptic in regard to

human testimony. It is so with the believer and his God. If we believe aright, we believe God as the loving child believes its mother. Faith, in both instances, is the realization of truth; and truth, in both cases, works faith in the heart. The difference is in the truths believed, and not in the faculty by which we believe, nor in the exercise of this faculty. In the case of the infant, a mother is received into the heart by faith. In the case of the believer in Christ, Christ is received into the heart by faith. In the one case, faith works by the love of a mother; in the other, by the love of God, and of Christ. In the one case, faith embraces only temporal things; in the other, it takes hold of things divine and eternal. The infant, by faith, sees only the things which are visible to the eye of the body: the believer, by faith, sees with the eyes of his understanding those things which are unseen by the eyes of the body. Hence, says the apostle, "whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet, believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

2. The promises are addressed to our faculty, our susceptibility of hoping and loving. "By the exceedingly great and precious promises, we are said to be made partakers of the divine nature." This divine nature is love, for "God is love." And at the same time we hope for the good things promised; for hope is the *desire* and *expectation* of future promised good. Both our faith and hope work by love, and purify the heart. It becomes now our delight to run in the way of the divine commandments—and so persevering, we shall, as we hope, "have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city."

3. The threatenings are addressed to our fac-

ulty or susceptibility of fearing. He that does not fear, when exposed to danger, is not wise, but fool-hardy. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Our Savior commanded his disciples to fear; and the apostles, again and again, warned the followers of Christ "to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear." The divine threatenings are intended to inspire believers with this fear. Without it we can never appreciate the value of the gift of Christ, or the worth of our redemption. The patient must know the malignity of his malady, in order to appreciate the skill of the physician who cures him. Now, it is through the threatenings that we are, to a great extent, made acquainted with the malignity and direful consequences of sin, and that we learn the value of the grace of God, in sending one "able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him." Our Savior proceeds upon this principle, when he says that "he who has much forgiven, will love much." We have here the reason why Universalists, with all their preaching of the love of God, can not induce sinners to love God, nor to reform their lives. Sin is comparatively a trifle. They fail to teach the threatenings in their Scriptural and awful import; and hence their effort to cure the moral maladies of mankind are as if a quack should attempt to cure all the diseases of the country by the application of sugar; or as if a doctor should labor to excite me to infinite gratitude by reminding me that he had removed from my face a diminutive pimple!

4. The commandments, among which I reckon Baptism and the Lord's Supper, test our consciousness, and the whole moral state of the inner man. Paul's conversion affords a beautiful exemplification of this truth. No sooner is he convinced that Jesus is the Christ, than he exclaims, "Lord

what wilt thou have me to do?" and no sooner does the "devout disciple" tell him what to do, than he arises and is "baptized." He had received the "word of reconciliation," "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God," and it therefore "wrought effectually" in his believing heart. He had never learned to tamper with his conscience, to disregard its dictates; but, even when a persecutor, "lived in all good conscience before God. He was a large-souled man; honest, honorable; honest with himself and with his God! His soul was too large to slip through the meshes of the Gospel net. So the Gospel tests every man to whom it is preached. If he believes it, and is strictly a conscientious man, he is bound to obey it: and so, through life, walking in the "narrow way," seeking for glory, honor, immortality, "he keeps a conscience void of offense both toward God and toward man."

Thus, I have briefly shown the adaptation of the Gospel to the intellectual and moral nature of man. I say *briefly*, because this subject might easily and profitably be expanded to the dimensions of a volume. I still wish to qualify myself better and better for the putting of a right estimate upon the truth of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." It is "THE POWER," not *a power*? "the word of reconciliation," the reconciliatory Word.

I know of nothing on earth that is so badly treated as the Gospel. It is generally represented as having little or no native efficacy. There it lies, wholly inert, until the spirit takes it up, and impregnates it with life, and pushes it into the heart; or, as some modern divines express it, until "God owns his Word!"

MAN'S CAPABILITY OF MORAL ELEVATION AND OF
MORAL DEGRADATION.

"*I am fearfully and wonderfully made,*" is a sentiment replete with truth, and of momentous significancy! The moral nature of man is such, that he can not at any time be stationary. If, in the moral scale, he does not ascend, he inevitably descends! He either rises, step by step, toward that sublime moral and mental elevation of which he is capable, or slides along a slippery declivity, which leads to a state of moral degradation, far, far below brutality.

Man is the only being on earth that is capable of rising above, or of falling below itself! and this is a proof of the intrinsic excellency and dignity of human nature. Brutes are neither capable of moral elevation or degradation, because they have not been constituted by their Creator, moral beings, and are, consequently, incapable of moral action. But man has been constituted a moral being. The faculties of his soul and the organization and symmetry of his body, declare him the pre-eminent production of creative wisdom and goodness. He walks abroad with countenance erect. Intelligence burns in his eye; majesty sits enthroned on his countenance; the lamp of reason illumines his soul; and the whole sentient creation do him homage! This is the lofty elevation which by nature the human family have been permitted to occupy. But not only has the nature of man been thus elevated; the earth and its *fullness* have been given him—an overflowing abundance to minister to all his corporeal wants: and the heavens and the heaven of heavens have been brought into requisition to supply his moral necessities! Possessing an immortal spirit as well as a mortal body;

he requires intellectual as well as animal nourishment; he is a link between heavenly and earthly beings; and therefore the subject of the administrations of two worlds!

Here, then, stands man—the fearfully made, the wonderfully organized child of heaven! Behold his capability of improvement! Although in infancy more helpless than the young of any of the bestial tribes, yet soon strength braces his body, agility renders elastic his limbs, the sun of intellection illumines his mind, and he begins his ascent. Now he lisps with difficulty the names of his parents; presently he is a proficient in many languages; the thunder of his eloquence is heard in the house of God or in the Senate chamber; he captivates, he convulses listening thousands! Or it may be that, with Newton, he will scan the heavens; or with Locke, dissect the human mind: with Hunter, the human body; or with Smith, develop the deep principles of the human heart! Like Franklin, he may snatch the lightning from the heavens; or like Milton, astonish nations by the sublime melody of poetic numbers; or, what is better, like the benevolent Howard, become an angel of mercy to the sons and daughters of misery and poverty! Almost every nation and every age present cheering examples of the capability of man for improvement, moral and intellectual: and so lofty have been the intellectual and moral flights of thousands of illustrious men, that we dare not say to the improvable capacity of man, thus far shalt thou go, but no farther! From infantile imbecility and ignorance man may be capable, for aught we know, of winging his intellectual and moral flight to the heights of the heavenly principality, and finally to a pinnacle infinitely exalted above every adoring angel that now surrounds the throne of the Almighty! Eternity! yes, eternity is the ocean to which we are tend-

ing! and eternity is the duration which has been appointed for the intellectual and moral improvement of man!! Who, then, shall set limits to human improvement?

But let it be recollected that this capability of moral and intellectual improvement, by which we may gain so exalted an elevation, is that which renders us capable of illimitable degradation! We perceive not how it could have been otherwise! Without those principles, by the abuse of which men degrade themselves, they would be incapable of moral and mental elevation—as much so as a beast! Therefore, in the proportion in which man is capable of rising above, is he capable of falling below himself; and, as his ascent is slowly progressive, so may be his descent likewise! Very few men have ever been known to rush precipitately into the perpetration of the worst of crimes. They begin by the commission of smaller sins. Perhaps the young man sometimes ventures to swear; his conscience smites, but he refuses to hearken. He ventures occasionally into bad company, and becomes a tippler; without, however, any intention of ever becoming intoxicated! He abhors drunkenness! But evil communications imperceptibly corrupt his heart. He acquires by custom an additional appetite for spiritous liquors, and a taste for the company of his vile associates, and in a short time he becomes not only a tippler but a gambler. Now he is surrounded by the hot and poisonous fumes of every abomination. You may behold him staggering along the street, falling into the ditch, and belching forth a thousand imprecations!! Ah! poor youth! how art thou fallen!! But the worst is not yet told. The young man neglects his business, spends his money for naught; soon poverty presses upon him; and his sad career ends at the gallows or in the penitentiary!!! It is true, that all vicious

young men have not traveled this road so far; but still their vicious course has been the downward road—the pathway of degradation and wretchedness—that which, if followed, may lead not only to a most shameful state of moral degradation here, but to the society of “devils,” and “everlasting fire” hereafter.

Need we, in this place, inform the reader, that if all men were by nature totally depraved, they would neither be capable of rising above nor of falling below themselves? In no way within the compass of our imagination would they be capable of progression in either virtue or vice! The whole viperous brood would act the viper, from birth to manhood, and from manhood to the grave. Every power of every human body, soul and spirit would be brought into active requisition, in order to the committing of every possible sin. Every virtuous action would be hated, and every truth abhorred; while every sin, every species of moral corruption, would be loved by all the unregenerate, with the most intense and unabating affection. Each man throughout the world would hate every other man—nay, parents would hate their own children, or if they loved them, they would love *a mass of sin!!!* Do we not speak advisedly? If every man in the world were to act in accordance with the appalling picture just drawn, would he be *more* than totally depraved? Certainly he would not! It follows, then, with the clearness of demonstration, that if the doctrine of hereditary total depravity were true, the order of things above described would be immediately superinduced!! The whole man would love sin, because sin would be congenial with his nature; and he would hate every good thing, because all goodness would be in perfect opposition to his whole nature!! and his whole nature being wholly corrupt, would, with all its powers, tend

to ALL corruption. We have sometimes seen men who had, by a long course of wickedness, rendered themselves so depraved that they were unfit for society; they were hanged until they were dead! Now, these men were not more than totally depraved! Are all men by nature as depraved as these? Strange! strange! that this impossible doctrine should ever have been believed by reasonable creatures!

THE FACILITY WITH WHICH THE MIND OF MAN MAY
BE CAST INTO VARIOUS MORAL MOLDS.

The apostle Paul denominates the truths of the Christian religion, "*a mold of doctrine.*" Persons are said, when converted, to have been delivered into this mold. The idea is, that as metal takes the impressions of the mold into which it may be cast, so does the human mind receive the impressions which the truths of the Christian religion are calculated to make; it conforms itself to the whole genius of Christianity, as metal, in being cast, conforms itself to the whole internal configuration of its mold.

Now, as the truths of Christianity are denominated *a mold of doctrine*, so may all other systems of religion be denominated *molds of doctrine*. By a little observation we shall discover that religious systems are and have been exceedingly numerous. Myriads of them which were once popular, are now extinct; and still myriads continue to exist! We speak not exclusively of sectarian systems, which have been denominated Christian, but of Mohammedanism, and of all the systems of heathenism. Numerous, however, as religious systems are and have

been, the minds of the votarists of each and all of them, as if endowed with the metallic attribute of fusibility, have been delivered into and received the impressions of their respective systems.

Does not this fact indicate man's aptitude to belief? If we consider the various systems of religion which have been believed by man, faith will almost appear to be an element of human nature! Instead of an incapacity to believe a rational system of religion, supported by adequate evidence, he has, under various circumstances, exhibited a capacity to believe irrational systems of religion, supported by no evidence at all! Behold the Atheist! he believes against all testimony—against all faith! He believes in all unbelief! The fact is, man seems to have been so constituted, that he must bow to some system of faith, or to some system of opinions. Hence, even the Atheist does homage to his system, and he becomes zealous in order to its propagation. It is true, that he has said, "there is no God!!" But Nature is the Atheist's God!! He attributes to Nature almost all that Christians attribute to the Creator of nature, and professes to believe a thousand things in relation to it, for which he has no evidence! We conclude, then, that there is in human nature an inherent aptitude to belief; and that this aptitude is indicated by the readiness with which men have embraced, and the tenacity with which they have adhered to all manner of religious systems.

With what facility do children, until deceived, believe everything that is told them! The detection of falsehood in some of its associates, and not its native depravity, is that which engenders unbelief in its mind. If it were never to experience a falsehood, it would unhesitatingly believe everything which should be told it. This also is the principle upon which skepticism and

infidelity have taken their rise and gained their influence. Seeing much hypocrisy in a world under a religious garb; witnessing the pious frauds and religious tricks of many religious persons; knowing the hollow-heartedness of thousands who profess to be the followers of Christ; they have concluded, not from any peculiar perversity of their own nature, but from the deleterious influence of that dissimulation and falsehood which they have beheld in others, that the Christian Religion is a farce, an imposture, and that its original founders were cheats and impostors!

We have often seen an effect similar to this produced in the minds of children, by the falsehoods of parents, at a very early period. For some time the little innocent believed everything its parents told it; but finally, finding itself from time to time deceived by the false threats and false promises of its parents, it believed them with great difficulty; perhaps not at all! "Hush crying," the mother would say, "and I will give you a lump of sugar." "No you won't, ma," would bawl out the exasperated child! The mother, you perceive, had previously, by making promises to it which she had not fulfilled, taught it to distrust her word! And thus was the child led to accuse its mother of lying; perhaps to lie itself!! At any rate, the mother in the above case was spoiling the child, for if she kept her word, she was giving it a fee to cry again!!

Children are endowed with strongly imitative powers. With what facility do they learn to speak their mother-tongue; nay, even the provincialisms of each State are exhibited by its inhabitants with such accuracy, that a man of observation has no difficulty to tell, by a person's pronunciation, from what particular State he emigrated. With the same facility, also, do chil-

dren conform to the manners and customs of the countries in which they are educated ; and what is of particular interest, they seem to conform to good customs with the same ease with which they conform to bad ones. Behold the children of the Quakers ! Not more conspicuous are they for the use of "Thee" and "Thou," than for plainness of dress, simplicity of manners, industry, frugality, hatred of slavery, war, etc. These facts our own eyes and ears have witnessed, and they afford data for this legitimate conclusion ; that as the tender mind of youth is susceptible of conformity to the above-named good customs and principles of the Quakers, it is also capable of conformity to all the principles and customs of Christianity. *"Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*

" 'Tis education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

THE END.

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